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LOTHAIR.

BY THE

RIGHT HONORABLE B. DISRAELI.

"Nōsse omnia hae salus est adolescentulis."

TereTius.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
90, 92 & 94 GRAND STREET.
1870.
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21.12.52
CHAPTER I.

"I REMEMBER him a little boy," said the duchess, "a pretty little boy, but very shy. His mother brought him to us one day. She was a dear friend of mine; you know she was one of my bridesmaids?"

"And you have never seen him since, mamma?" inquired a married daughter, who looked like the younger sister of her mother.

"Never; he was an orphan shortly after; I have often reproached myself, but it is so difficult to see boys. Then, he never went to school, but was brought up in the Highlands with a rather savage uncle; and if he and Bertram had not become friends at Christchurch, I do not well see how we ever could have known him."

These remarks were made in the morning-room of Brentham, where the mistress of the mansion sat surrounded by her daughters, all occupied with various works. One knitted a purse, another adorned a slipper, a third emblazoned a page. Beautiful forms in counsel leaned over frames glowing with embroidery, while two fair sisters more remote occasionally burst into melody as they tried the passages of a new air, which had been communicated to them in the manuscript of some devoted friend.

The duchess, one of the greatest heiresses of Britain, singularly beautiful and gifted with native grace, had married in her teens one of the wealthiest and most powerful of our nobles, and scarcely older than herself. Her husband was as distinguished for his appearance and his manners as his bride, and those who speculate on race were interested in watching the development of their progeny, who in form, and color, and voice, and manner, and mind, were a reproduction of their parents, who seemed only the elder brother and sister of a gifted circle. The daughters with one exception came first, and all met the same fate. After seventeen years of a delicious home they were presented, and immediately married; and all to personages of high consideration. After the first conquest, this fate seemed as regular as the order of Nature. Then came a son, who was now at Christchurch, and then several others, some at school, and some scarcely out of the nursery. There was one daughter unmarried, and she was to be presented next season. Though the family likeness was still apparent in Lady Corisande, in general expression she differed from her sisters. They were all alike with their delicate aquiline noses, bright complexions, short upper lips, and eyes of sunny light. The beauty of Lady Corisande was even more distinguished and more regular, but whether it were the effect of her dark-brown hair and darker eyes, her countenance had not the lustre of the rest, and its expression was grave and perhaps pensive.

The duke, though still young, and naturally of a gay and joyous temperament, had a high sense of duty, and strong domestic feelings. He was never wanting in his public place, and he was fond of his wife and his children; still more, proud of them. Every day when he looked into the glass, and gave the last touch to his consummate toilet, he offered his grateful thanks to
Providence that his family was not unworthy of him.

His grace was accustomed to say that he had only one misfortune, and it was a great one; he had no home. His family had married so many heiresses, and he, consequently, possessed so many halls and castles, at all of which, periodically, he wished, from a right feeling, to reside, that there was no sacred spot identified with his life in which his heart, in the bustle and tumult of existence, could take refuge. Brentham was the original seat of his family, and he was even passionately fond of it; but it was remarkable how very short a period of his yearly life was passed under its stately roof. So it was his custom always to repair to Brentham the moment the season was over, and he would exact from his children, that, however short might be the time, they would be his companions under those circumstances. The daughters loved Brentham, and they loved to please their father; but the sons-in-law, though they were what is called devoted to their wives, and, unusual as it may seem, scarcely less attached to their legal parents, did not fall very easily into this arrangement. The country in August without sport was unquestionably to them a severe trial: nevertheless, they rarely omitted making their appearance, and, if they did occasionally vanish, sometimes to Cowes, sometimes to Switzerland, sometimes to Norway, they always wrote to their wives, and always alluded to their immediate or approaching return; and their letters gracefully contributed to the fund of domestic amusement.

And yet it would be difficult to find a fairer scene than Brentham offered, especially in the lustrous effulgence of a glorious English summer. It was an Italian palace of freestone; vast, ornate, and in scrupulous condition; its spacious and graceful chambers filled with treasures of art, and rising itself from statued and stately terraces. At their foot spread a gardened domain of considerable extent, bright with flowers, dim with coverts of rare shrubs, and musical with fountains. Its limit reached a park, with timber such as the midland counties only can produce. The fallow deer trooped among its ferny solitudes and gigantic oaks; but, beyond the waters of the broad and winding lake, the scene became more savage, and the eye caught the dark form of the red deer on some jutting mount, shrinking with scorn from communion with his gentler brethren.

CHAPTER II.

Lothair was the little boy whom the duchess remembered. He was a posthumous child, and soon lost a devoted mother. His only relation was one of his two guardians, a Scotch noble—a Presbyterian and a Whig. This uncle was a widower with some children, but they were girls, and, though Lothair was attached to them, too young to be his companions. Their father was a keen, hard man, honorable and just, but with no softness of heart or manner. He guarded with precise knowledge and with unceasing vigilance over Lothair's vast inheritance, which was in many counties and in more than one kingdom; but he educated him in a Highland home, and when he had reached boyhood thought fit to send him to the High School of Edinburgh. Lothair passed a monotonous, if not a dull, life; but he found occasional solace in the scenes of a wild and beautiful nature, and delight in all the sports of the field and forest, in which he was early initiated and completely indulged. Although an Englishman, he was fifteen before he revisited his country, and then his glimpses of England were brief, and to him scarcely satisfactory. He was hurried sometimes to vast domains, which he heard were his own; and sometimes whisked to the huge metropolis, where he was shown St. Paul's and the British Museum. These visits left a vague impression of bustle without kindness, and exhaustion without excitement; and he was glad to get back to his glens, to the moor and the mountain-stream.

His father, in the selection of his guardians, had not contemplated this system of education. While he secured, by the appointment of his brother-in-law, the most competent and trustworthy steward of his son's
fortune, he had depended on another for that influence which should mould the character, guide the opinions, and form the tastes of his child. The other guardian was a clergyman, his father's private tutor and heart-friend; scarcely his parent's senior, but exercising over him irresistible influence, for he was a man of shining talents and abounding knowledge, brilliant and profound. But unhappily, shortly after Lothair became an orphan, this distinguished man seceded from the Anglican communion, and entered the Church of Rome. From this moment there was war between the guardians. The uncle endeavored to drive his colleague from the trust: in this he failed, for the priest would not renounce his office. The Scotch noble succeeded, however, in making it a fruitless one: he thwarted every suggestion that emanated from the obnoxious quarter; and, indeed, the secret reason of the almost constant residence of Lothair in Scotland, and of his harsh education, was the fear of his relative, that the moment he crossed the border he might, by some mysterious process, fall under the influence that his guardian so much dreaded and detested.

There was, however, a limit to these severe precautions, even before Lothair should reach his majority. His father had expressed in his will that his son should be educated at the University of Oxford, and at the same college of which he had been a member. His uncle was of opinion he complied with the spirit of this instruction by sending Lothair to the University of Edinburgh, which would give the last tonic to his moral system; and then commenced a celebrated chancery-suit, instituted by the Roman Catholic guardian, in order to enforce a literal compliance with the educational condition of the will. The uncle looked upon this movement as a popish plot, and had recourse to every available allegation and argument to baffle it: but ultimately in vain. With every precaution to secure his Protestant principles, and to guard against the influence, or even personal interference, of his Roman Catholic guardian, the lord-chancellor decided that Lothair should be sent to Christchurch.

Here Lothair, who had never been favored with a companion of his own age and station, soon found a congenial one in the heir of Brentham. Inseparable in pastime, not dissociated even in study, sympathizing companionship soon ripened into fervent friendship. They lived so much together that the idea of separation became not only painful but impossible; and, when vacation arrived, and Brentham was to be visited by its future lord, what more natural than that it should be arranged that Lothair should be a visitor to his domain?

CHAPTER III.

Although Lothair was the possessor of as many palaces and castles as the duke himself, it is curious that his first dinner at Brentham was almost his introduction into refined society. He had been a guest at the occasional banquets of his uncle; but these were festivals of the Picts and Scots; rude plenty and coarse splendor, with noise instead of conversation, and a tumult of obstructive dependants, who impeded, by their want of skill, the very convenience which they were purposed to facilitate. How different the surrounding scene! A table covered with flowers, bright with fanciful crystal, and porcelain that had belonged to sovereigns, who had given a name to its color or its form. As for those present, all seemed grace and gentleness, from the radiant daughters of the house to the noiseless attendants that anticipated all his wants, and sometimes seemed to suggest his wishes.

Lothair sat between two of the married daughters. They addressed him with so much sympathy that he was quite enchanted. When they asked their pretty questions and made their sparkling remarks, roses seemed to drop from their lips, and sometimes diamonds. It was a rather large party, for the Brentham family were so numerous that they themselves made a festival. There were four married daughters, the duke and two sons-in-law, a clergyman or two, and some ladies and gentlemen who were seldom absent from this circle, and who, by their
useful talents and various accomplishments, alleviated the toil or cares of life from which even princes are not exempt.

When the ladies had retired to the duchess's drawing-room, all the married daughters clustered round their mother.

"Do you know, mamma, we all think him very good-looking," said the youngest married daughter, the wife of the listless and handsome St. Aldegonde.

"And not at all shy," said Lady Montairy, "though reserved."

"I admire deep-blue eyes with dark lashes," said the duchess. 

Notwithstanding the decision of Lady Montairy, Lothair was scarcely free from embarrassment when he rejoined the ladies; and was so afraid of standing alone, or talking only to men, that he was almost on the point of finding refuge in his dinner-companions, had not he instinctively felt that this would have been a social blunder. But the duchess relieved him: her gracious glance caught his at the right moment, and she rose and met him some way as he advanced. The friends had arrived so late, that Lothair had had only time to make a reverence of ceremony before dinner.

"It is not our first meeting," said her grace; "but that you cannot remember."

"Indeed I do," said Lothair, "and your grace gave me a golden heart."

"How can you remember such things," exclaimed the duchess, "which I had myself forgotten!"

"I have rather a good memory," replied Lothair; "and it is not wonderful that I should remember this, for it is the only present that ever was made me."

The evenings at Brentham were short, but they were sweet. It was a musical family, without being fanatical on the subject. There was always music, but it was not permitted that the guests should be deprived of other amusements. But music was the basis of the evening's campaign. The duke himself sometimes took a second; the four married daughters warbled sweetly; but the great performer was Lady Corisande. When her impassioned tones sounded, there was a hushed silence in every chamber; otherwise, many things were said and done amid accompanying melodies, that animated without distracting even a whistplayer. The duke himself rather preferred a game of piquet or écarté with Captain Mildmay, and sometimes retired, with a troop to a distant, but still visible, apartment, where they played with billiard-balls games which were not billiards.

The ladies had retired, the duke had taken his glass of seltzer-water, and had disappeared. The gentlemen lingered and looked at each other, as if they were an assembly of poachers gathering for an expedition, and then Lord St. Aldegonde, tall, fair, and languid, said to Lothair, "do you smoke?"

"No!"

"I should have thought Bertram would have seduced you by this time. Then let us try. Montairy will give you one of his cigarettes, so mild that his wife never finds him out."

CHAPTER IV.

The breakfast-room at Brentham was very bright. It opened on a garden of its own, which, at this season, was so glowing, and cultured into patterns so fanciful and finished, that it had the resemblance of a vast mosaic. The walls of the chamber were covered with bright drawings and sketches of our modern masters, and frames of interesting miniatures, and the meal was served on half a dozen or more round tables, which vied with each other in grace and merit; brilliant as a cluster of Greek or Italian republics, instead of a great metropolitan table, like a central government absorbing all the geniuses and resources of the society.

Every scene in this life at Brentham charmed Lothair, who, though not conscious of being of a particularly gloomy temper, often felt that he had, somehow or other, hitherto passed through life rarely with pleasure, and never with joy.

After breakfast the ladies retired to their morning-room, and the gentlemen strolled to the stables, Lord St. Aldegonde light-
ing a Manilla cheroot of enormous length. As Lothair was very fond of horses, this delighted him. The stables at Brentham were rather too far from the house, but they were magnificent, and the stud worthy of them. It was numerous and choice, and, above all, it was useful. It could supply a reader number of capital riding-horses than any stable in England. Brentham was a great riding family. In the summer season the duke delighted to head a numerous troop, penetrate far into the country, and scamper home to a nine-o’clock dinner. All the ladies of the house were fond and fine horsewomen. The mount of one of these riding-parties was magical. The dames and demesl vaulted on their barbs, and genets, and thorough-bred hacks, with such airy majesty; they were absolutely overwhelming with their bewildering habits and their bewitching hats.

Every thing was so new in this life at Brentham to Lothair, as well as so agreeable, that the first days passed by no means rapidly; for, though it sounds strange, time moves with equal slowness whether we experience many impressions or none. In a new circle every character is a study, and every incident an adventure; and the multiplicity of the images and emotions restrains the hours. But after a few days, though Lothair was not less delighted, for he was more so, he was astonished at the rapidity of time. The life was exactly the same, but equally pleasant; the same charming companions, the same refined festivity, the same fascinating amusements; but to his dismay Lothair recollected that nearly a fortnight had elapsed since his arrival. Lord St. Aldegonde also was on the wing; he was obliged to go to Cowes to see a sick friend, though he considerably left Bertha behind him. The other son-in-law remained, for he could not tear himself away from his wife. He was so distractedly fond of Lady Montairy that he would only smoke cigarettes. Lothair felt it was time to go, and he broke the circumstance to his friend Bertram.

These two “old fellows,” as they mutually described each other, could not at all agree as to the course to be pursued. Bertram looked upon Lothair’s suggestion as an act of desertion from himself. At their time of life, the claims of friendship are paramount. And where could Lothair go to? And what was there to do? Nowhere, and nothing. Whereas, if he would remain a little longer, as the duke expected and also the duchess, Bertram would go with him anywhere he liked, and do any thing he chose. So Lothair remained.

In the evening, seated by Lady Montairy, Lothair observed on her sister’s singing, and said, “I never heard any of our great singers, but I cannot believe there is a finer voice in existence.”

“Corisande’s is a fine voice,” said Lady Montairy, “but I admire her expression more than her tone; for there are certainly many finer voices, and some day you will hear them.”

“But I prefer expression,” said Lothair very decidedly.

“Ah, yes! doubtless,” said Lady Montairy, who was working a purse, “and that’s what we all want, I believe; at least we married daughters, they say. My brother, Granville St. Aldegonde, says we are all too much alike, and that Bertha St. Aldegonde would be perfect if she had no sisters.”

“I don’t at all agree with Lord St. Aldegonde,” said Lothair, with energy. “I do not think it is possible to have too many relatives like you and your sisters.”

Lady Montairy looked up with a smile, but she did not meet a smiling countenance. He seemed, what is called, an earnest young man, this friend of her brother Bertram.

At this moment the duke sent swift messengers for all to come, even the duchess, to partake in a new game just arrived from Russia, some miraculous combination of billiard-balls. Some rose directly, some lingering a moment arranging their work, but all were in motion. Corisande was at the piano, and disencumbering herself of some music. Lothair went up to her rather abruptly:

“Your singing,” he said, “is the finest thing I ever heard. I am so happy that I, am not going to leave Brentham to-morrow. There is no place in the world that I think equal to Brentham.”
“And I love it, too, and no other place,” she replied; “and I should be quite happy if I never left it.”

CHAPTER V.

Lord Montairy was passionately devoted to croquet. He flattered himself that he was the most accomplished male performer existing. He would have thought absolutely the most accomplished, were it not for the unrivalled feats of Lady Montairy. She was the queen of croquet. Her sister also used the mallet with admirable skill, but not like Georgina. Lord Montairy always looked forward to his summer croquet at Brentham. It was a great croquet family, the Brentham family; even listless Lord St. Aldegonde would sometimes play, with a cigar never out of his mouth. They did not object to his smoking in the air. On the contrary, “they rather liked it.” Captain Mildmay, too, was a brilliant hand, and had written a treatise on croquet—the best going.

There was a great croquet-party one morning at Brentham. Some neighbours had been invited who loved the sport. Mr. Blenkinsop, a grave young gentleman, whose countenance never relaxed while he played, and who was understood to give his mind entirely up to croquet. He was the owner of the largest estate in the county, and it was thought would have very much liked to have allied himself with one of the young ladies of the house of Brentham; but these flower were always plucked so quickly, that his relations with the distinguished circle never grew more intimate than croquet. He drove over with some fine horses, and several cases and bags containing instruments and weapons for the fray. His sister came with him, who had forty thousand pounds, but, they said, in some mysterious manner dependent on his consent to her marriage; and it was added that Mr. Blenkinsop would not allow his sister to marry because he would miss her so much in his favorite pastime. There were some other morning vis-

itors, and one or two young curates in cassocks.

It seemed to Lothair a game of great deliberation and of more interest than gayety, though sometimes a cordial cheer, and sometimes a ringing laugh of amiable derision, notified a signal triumph or a disastrous failure. But the scene was brilliant: a marvellous lawn, the duchess’s Turkish tent with its rich hangings, and the players themselves, the prettiest of all the spectacle, with their coquetish hats, and their half-veiled and half-revealed under-raitment, scarlet and silver, or blue and gold, made up a sparkling and modish scene.

Lothair, who had left the players for a while, and was regaining the lawn, met the duchess.

“Your grace is not going to leave us, I hope?” he said, rather anxiously.

“For a moment. I have long promised to visit the new dairy; and I think this a good opportunity.”

“I wish I might be your companion,” said Lothair; and, invited, he was by her grace’s side.

They turned into a winding walk of thick and fragrant shrubs, and, after a while, they approached a dell, surrounded with high trees that environed it with perpetual shade; in the centre of the dell was apparently a Gothic shrine, fair in design and finished in execution, and this was the duchess’s new dairy. A pretty sight is a first-rate dairy, with its flooring of fanciful tiles, and its cool and shrouded chambers, its stained windows and its marble slabs, and porcelain pans of cream, and plenteous platters of fantastically formed butter.

“Mrs. Woods and her dairy-maids look like a Dutch picture,” said the duchess.

“Were you ever in Holland?”

“I have never been anywhere,” said Lothair.

“You should travel,” said the duchess.

“I have no wish,” said Lothair.

“The duke has given me some Coreean fowls,” said the duchess to Mrs. Woods, when they had concluded their visit. “Do you think you could take care of them for me?”

“Well, Grace, I am sure I will do my
best; but then they are very troublesome, and I was not fortunate with my Cochin. I had rather they were sent to the aviary. Grace, if it were all the same."

"I should so like to see the aviary," said Lothair.

"Well, we will go."

And this rather extended their walk, and withdrew them more from the great amusement of the day.

"I wish your grace would do me a great favor," said Lothair, abruptly breaking a rather prolonged silence.

"And what is that?" said the duchess.

"It is a very great favor," repeated Lothair.

"If it be in my power to grant it, its magnitude would only be an additional recommendation."

"Well," said Lothair, blushing deeply, and speaking with much agitation, "I would ask your grace’s permission to offer my hand to your daughter."

The duchess looked amazed. "Corisande!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, to Lady Corisande."

"Corisande," replied the duchess, after a pause, "has absolutely not yet entered the world. Corisande is a child; and you—you, my dear friend—I am sure you will pardon me if I say so—you are not very much older than Corisande."

"I have no wish to enter the world," said Lothair, with much decision.

"I am not an enemy to youthful marriages," said the duchess. "I married early myself, and my children married early; and I am very happy, and I hope they are; but some experience of society before we settle is most desirable, and is one of the conditions, I cannot but believe, of that felicity which we all seek."

"I hate society," said Lothair. "I would never go out of my domestic circle, if it were the circle I contemplate."

"My dear young friend," said the duchess, "you could hardly have seen enough of society to speak with so much decision."

"I have seen quite enough of it," said Lothair. "I went to an evening party last season—I came up from Christchurch on purpose for it—and if ever they catch me at another, they shall inflict any penalty they please."

"I fear it was a stupid party," said the duchess, smiling, and glad to turn, if possible, the conversation into a lighter vein.

"No, it was a very grand party, I believe, and not exactly stupid—it was not that; but I was disgusted with all I saw and all I heard. It seemed to me a mass of affectation, falsehood, and malignity."

"Oh! dear," said the duchess, "how very dreadful! But I did not mean merely going to parties for society; I meant knowledge of the world, and that experience which enables us to form sound opinions on the affairs of life."

"Oh! as for that," said Lothair, "my opinions are already formed on every subject; that is to say, every subject of importance; and, what is more, they will never change."

"I could not say that of Corisande," said the duchess.

"I think we agree on all the great things," said Lothair, musingly. "Her church views may be a little higher than mine, but I do not anticipate any permanent difficulty on that head. Although my uncle made me go to kirk, I always hated it, and always considered myself a churchman. Then, as to churches themselves, she is in favor of building churches, and so am I; and schools—there is no quantity of schools I would not establish. My opinion is, you cannot have too much education, provided it be founded on a religious basis. I would sooner renounce the whole of my inheritance than consent to secular education."

"I should be sorry to see any education but a religious education," remarked the duchess.

"Well, then," said Lothair, "that is our life, or a great part of it. To complete it, there is that to which I really wish to devote my existence, and in which I instinctively feel Lady Corisande would sympathize with me—the extinction of pauperism."

"That is a vast subject," said the duchess.

"It is the terror of Europe and the disgrace of Britain," said Lothair; "and I am
resolved to grapple with it. It seems to me that pauperism is not an affair so much of wages as of dwellings. If the working-classes were properly lodged, at their present rate of wages, they would be richer. They would be healthier and happier at the same cost. I am so convinced of this, that, the moment I am master, I shall build two thousand cottages on my estates. I have the designs already."

"I am much in favor of improved dwellings for the poor," said the duchess; "but then you must take care that your dwellings are cottages, and not villas like my cousin's, the Duke of Luton."

"I do not think I shall make that mistake," replied Lothair. "It constantly engages my thought. I am wearied of hearing of my wealth, and I am conscious it has never brought me any happiness. I have lived a great deal alone, dearest duchess, and thought much of these things, but I feel now I should be hardly equal to the effort, unless I had a happy home to fall back upon."

"And you will have a happy home in due time," said the duchess; "and with such good and great thoughts you deserve one. But take the advice of one who loved your mother, and who would extend to you the same affection as to her own children; before you take a step which cannot be recalled, see a little more of the world." Lothair shook his head. "No," he said, after a pause. "My idea of perfect society is being married as I propose, and paying visits to Bretham; and when the visits to Bretham ceased, then I should like you and the duke to pay visits to us."

"But that would be a fairy-tale," said the duchess.

So they walked on in silence.

Suddenly, and abruptly, Lothair turned to the duchess and said, "Does your grace see any objection to my speaking to your daughter?"

"Dear friend, indeed, yes. What you would say would only agitate and disturb Corisande. Her character is not yet formed, and its future is perplexing, at least to me," murmured the mother. "She has not the simple nature of her sisters. It is a deeper and more complicated mind, and I watch its development with fond but anxious interest." Then, in a lighter tone, she added, "You do not know very much of us. Try to know more. Everybody under this roof views you with regard, and you are the brother friend of our eldest son. Wherever we are, you will always find a home; but do not touch again upon this subject, at least at present, for it distresses me." And then she took his arm and pressed it, and by this time they had gained the croquet-ground.

CHAPTER VI.

One of the least known squares in London is Hexham Square, though it is one of the oldest. Not that it is very remote from the throng of existence, but it is isolated in a dingy district of silent and decaying streets. Once it was a favored residence of opulence and power, and its architecture still indicates its former and prouder destiny. But its noble mansions are now divided and broken up into separate dwellings, or have been converted into chambers and offices. Lawyers, and architects, and agents, dwell in apartments where the richly-sculptured chimney-pieces, the carved and gilded pediments over the doors, and sometimes even the painted ceilings, tell a tale of vanished stateliness and splendor.

A considerable portion of the north side of the square is occupied by one house standing in a court-yard, with iron gates to the thoroughfare. This is Hexham House, and where Lord Hexham lived in the days of the first Georges. It is reduced in size since his time, two considerable wings having been pulled down about sixty years ago, and their materials employed in building some residences of less pretension. But the body of the dwelling-house remains, and the court-yard, though reduced in size, has been retained.

Hexham House has an old oak entrance-hall panelled with delicacy, and which has escaped the rising arts of speculators in furniture; and out of it rises a staircase of the
same material, of a noble character, adorned occasionally with figures; armorial animals holding shields, and sometimes a grotesque form rising from fruits and flowers, all doubtless the work of some famous carver.

The staircase leads to a corridor, on which several doors open, and through one of these, at the moment of our history, a man, dressed in a dark cassock, and holding a card in his hand, was entering a spacious chamber, meagrely, but not shabbily, furnished. There was a rich cabinet and a fine picture. In the next room, not less spacious, but which had a more inhabited look, a cheerful fire, tables covered with books and papers, and two individuals busily at work with their pens; he gave the card to a gentleman who wore also the cassock, and who stood before the fire with a book in his hand, and apparently dictating to one of the writers.

"Impossible!" said the gentleman, shaking his head; "I could not even go in, as Monsignore Berwick is with his eminence." "But what shall I do?" said the attendant; "his eminence said that when Mr. Giles called he never was to be denied."

"The monsignore has been here a long time; you must beg Mr. Giles to wait. Make him comfortable; give him a newspaper; not the Tablet, the Times; men like Mr. Giles love reading the advertisements. Or stop, give him this, his eminence's lecture on geology; it will show him the Church has no fear of science. Ah! there's my bell; Mr. Giles will not have to wait long." So saying, the gentleman put down his volume and disappeared, through an antechamber, into a farther apartment.

It was a library, of moderate dimensions, and yet its well-filled shelves contained all the weapons of learning and controversy which the deepest and the most active of ecclesiastical champions could require. It was unlike modern libraries, for it was one in which folios greatly predominated; and they stood in solemn and sometimes magnificent array, for they bore, many of them, on their ancient though costly bindings, the proofs that they had belonged to many a prince and even sovereign of the Church. Over the mantel-piece hung a portrait of his holiness Pius IX., and on the table, in the midst of many papers, was an ivory crucifix.

The master of the library had risen from his seat when the chief secretary entered, and was receiving an obesance. Above, the middle height, his stature seemed magnified by the attenuation of his form. It seemed that the soul never had so frail and fragile a tenement. He was dressed in a dark cassock with a red border, and wore scarlet stockings; and over his cassock a purple tippet, and on his breast a small golden cross. His countenance was naturally of an extreme pallor, though at this moment slightly flushed with the animation of a deeply-interesting conference. His cheeks were hollow, and his gray eyes seemed sunk into his clear and noble brow, but they flashed with irresistible penetration. Such was Cardinal Grandison.

"All that I can do is," said his eminence, when his visitor was ushered out, and slightly shrugging his shoulders, "is to get it postponed until I go to Rome, and even then I must not delay my visit. This crossing the Alps in winter is a trial—but we must never repine; and there is nothing which we must not encounter to prevent incalculable mischief. The publication of the Scotch hierarchy at this moment will destroy the labors of years. And yet they will not see it! I cannot conceive who is urging them, for I am sure they must have some authority from home.—You have something for me, Chidlock," he added inquiringly, for his keen eye caught the card.

"I regret to trouble your eminence when you need repose, but the bearer of this card seems to have been importunate, and to have appealed to your name and personal orders;" and he gave the cardinal the card.

"Yes," said the cardinal, looking at the card with much interest; "this is a person I must always see."

And so, in due course, they ushered into the library a gentleman with a crimson and well-stuffed bag, of a composed yet cheerful aspect, who addressed the cardinal with respect but without embarrassment, saying, "I am ashamed to trouble your eminence with only matters of form—absolutely more
matters of form; but I obey, sir, your own instructions."

"It is not for me to depreciate form," replied the cardinal; "and in business there are no mere matters of form."

"Merely the wood accounts," continued the visitor; "they must be approved by both the guardians, or the money cannot be received by the bankers. Your eminence, you see, has sanctioned the felling, and authorized the sales, and these are the final accounts, which must be signed before we pay in."

"Give them to me," said the cardinal, stretching out both his hands as he received a mass of paper folios. His eminence resumed his chair, and hastily examined the sheets. "Ah!" he said, "no ordinary felling—it reaches over seven counties. By-the-by, Bracewood Forest—what about the enclosure? I have heard no more of it."

Then, murmuring to himself—"Grentham Wood—how well I remember Grentham Wood, with his dear father!"

"If we could sign to-day," said the visitor in a tone of professional cajolery; "time is important."

"And it shall not be wasted," replied the cardinal. "But I must look over the accounts. I doubt not all is quite regular, but I wish to make myself a little familiar with the scene of action; perhaps to recall the past," he added. "You shall have them tomorrow, Mr. Giles."

"Your eminence will have very different accounts to settle in a short time," said Mr. Giles, smiling. "We are hard at work; it takes three of our clerks constantly occupied."

"But you have yet got time."

"I don't know that," said Mr. Giles. "The affairs are very large. And the mines—they give us the greatest trouble. Our Mr. James Roundell was two months in Wales last year about them. It took up the whole of his vacation. And your eminence must remember that time flies. In less than eight months he will be of age."

"Very true," said the cardinal; "time indeed flies, and so much to be done! By-the-by, Mr. Giles, have you by any chance heard any thing lately of my child?"

"I have heard of him a good deal of late, for a client of ours, Lord Montairy, met him at Brentham this summer, and was a long time there with him. After that, I hear, he went deer-stalking with some of his young friends; but he is not very fond of Scotland; had rather too much of it, I suspect; but the truth is, sir, I saw him this very day."

"Indeed!"

"Some affairs have brought him up to town, and I rather doubt whether he will return to Oxford—at least, so he talks."

"Ah! I have never seen him since he was an infant, I might say," said the cardinal. "I suppose I shall see him again, if only when I resign my trust; but I know not. And yet few things would be more interesting to me than to meet him!"

Mr. Giles seemed moved, for him almost a little embarrassed; he seemed to blush, and then he cleared his throat. "It would be too great a liberty," said Mr. Giles, "I feel that very much—and yet, if your eminence would condescend, though I hardly suppose it possible, his lordship is really going to do us the honor of dining with us to-day; only a few friends, and if your eminence could make the sacrifice, and it were not an act of too great presumption, to ask your eminence to join our party."

"I never eat and I never drink," said the cardinal. "I am sorry to say I cannot. I like dinner society very much. You see the world, and you hear things which you do not hear otherwise. For a time I presumed to accept invitations, though I sat with an empty plate; but, though the world was indulgent to me, I felt that my habits were an embarrassment to the happier feasters: it was not fair, and so I gave it up. But I tell you what, Mr. Giles: I shall be in your quarter this evening: perhaps you would permit me to drop in and pay my respects to Mrs. Giles—I have wished to do so before."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Giles was a leading partner in the firm of Roundells, Giles, and Roundell; among the most eminent solicitors of Lin-
coln's Inn. He, in these days of prolonged maturity, might be described as still a young man. He had inherited from his father not only a large share in a first-rate business, but no inconsiderable fortune; and though he had, in her circles, a celebrated wife, he had no children. He was opulent and prosperous, with no cares and anxieties of his own, and loved his profession, for which he was peculiarly qualified, being a man of uncommon sagacity, very difficult to deceive, and yet one who sympathized with his clients, who were all personally attached to him, and many of whom were among the distinguished personages of the realm.

During an important professional visit to Ireland, Mr. Giles had made the acquaintance of Miss Apollonia Smylie, the niece of an Irish peer; and, though the lady was much admired and courted, had succeeded, after a time, in inducing her to become the partner of his life.

Mrs. Giles, or, as she described herself, Mrs. Putney Giles, taking advantage of a second and territorial Christian name of her husband, was a showy woman; decidedly handsome, unquestionably accomplished, and gifted with energy and enthusiasm which far exceeded even her physical advantages. Her principal mission was to destroy the papacy and to secure Italian unity. Her lesser impulses were to become acquainted with the aristocracy, and to be herself surrounded by celebrities. Having a fine house in Tyburnia, almost as showy as herself, and a husband who was never so happy as when gratifying her wishes, she did not find it difficult in a considerable degree to pursue and even accomplish her objects. The Putney Giles gave a great many dinners, and Mrs. Putney received her world frequently, if not periodically. As they entertained with profusion, her well-lighted saloons were considerably attended. These assemblies were never dull; the materials not being ordinary, often startling, sometimes even brilliant, occasionally rather heterogeneous. For, though being a violent Protestant, and of extreme conservative opinions, her antipapal antipathies and her Italian predilections frequently involved her with acquaintances not so distinguished as she deemed herself for devotion to the cause of order and orthodoxy. It was rumored that the brooding brow of Mazzini had been observed in her rooms, and there was no sort of question that she had thrown herself in ecstatic idolatry at the feet of the hero of Caprera.

On the morning of the day on which he intended to visit Cardinal Grandison, Mr. Giles, in his chambers at Lincoln's Inn, was suddenly apprized, by a clerk, that an interview with him was sought by a client no less distinguished than Lothair.

Although Mr. Giles sat opposite two rows of tin boxes, each of which was numbered, and duly inscribed with the name of Lothair and that of the particular estate to which it referred, Mr. Giles, though he had had occasional communications with his client, was personally unacquainted with him. He viewed, therefore, with no ordinary curiosity the young man who was ushered into his room; a shapely youth slightly above the middle height; of simple, but distinguished mien, with a countenance naturally pale, though somewhat bronzed by a life of air and exercise, and a profusion of dark-auburn hair.

And for what could Lothair be calling on Mr. Giles?

It seems that one of Lothair's intimate companions had got into a scrape, and under these circumstances had what is styled "made a friend" of Lothair; that is to say, confided to him his trouble, and asked his advice, with a view, when given, of its being followed by an offer of assistance.

Lothair, though inexperienced and very ingenuous, was not devoid of a certain instinctive perception of men and things, which rendered it difficult for him to be an easy prey. His natural disposition, and his comparatively solitary education, had made him a keen observer, and he was one who meditated over his observations. But he was naturally generous and sensible of kindness; and this was a favorite companion—next to Bertram, his most intimate.

Lothair was quite happy in the opportunity of soothing a perturbed spirit whose society had been to him a source of so much gratification.
It was not until Lothair had promised to extricate his friend from his overwhelming difficulties, that, upon reflection and examination, he found the act on his part was not so simple and so easy as he had assumed it to be. His guardians had apportioned to him an allowance in every sense adequate to his position; and there was no doubt, had he wished to exceed it for any legitimate purpose, not the slightest difficulty on their part would have been experienced.

Such a conjuncture had never occurred. Lothair was profuse, but he was not prodigal. He gratified all his fancies, but they were not ignoble ones; and he was not only sentimentally, but systematically, charitable. He had a great number of fine horses, and he had just paid for an expensive yacht. In a word, he spent a great deal of money, and until he called at his bankers to learn what sums were at his disposition he was not aware that he had overdrawn his account.

This was rather awkward. Lothair wanted a considerable sum, and he wanted it at once. Irrespective of the consequent delay, he shrank from any communication with his guardians. From his uncle he had become, almost insensibly, estranged, and with his other guardian he had never had the slightest communication. Under these circumstances he recalled the name of the solicitor of the trustees, between whom and himself there had been occasional correspondence; and, being of a somewhat impetuous disposition, he rode off at once from his hotel to Lincoln's Inn.

Mr. Giles listened to the narrative with unbroken interest and unswerving patience, with his eyes fixed on his client, and occasionally giving a sympathetic nod.

"And so," concluded Lothair, "I thought I would come to you."

"We are honored," said Mr. Giles. "And, certainly, it is quite absurd that your lordship should want money, and for a worthy purpose, and not be able to command it. Why! the balance in the name of the trustees never was so great as at this moment; and this very day, or to-morrow at farthest, I shall pay no less than eight-and-thirty thousand pounds timber-money to the account."

"Well, I don't want a fifth of that," said Lothair.

"Your lordship has an objection to apply to the trustees?" inquired Mr. Giles.

"That is the point of the whole of my statement," said Lothair somewhat impatiently.

"And yet it is the right and regular thing," said Mr. Giles.

"It may be right and it may be regular, but it is out of the question."

"Then we will say no more about it. What I want to prevent," said Mr. Giles, musingly, "is anything absurd happening. There is no doubt if your lordship went into the street and said you wanted ten thousand pounds, or a hundred thousand, fifty people would supply you immediately—but you would have to pay for it. Some enormous usury! That would be bad; but the absurdity of the thing would be greater than the mischief. Roundells, Giles, and Roundell could not help you in that manner. That is not our business. We are glad to find money for our clients at a legal rate of interest, and the most moderate rate feasible. But then there must be security, and the best security. But here we must not conceal it from ourselves, my lord, we have no security whatever. At this moment your lordship has no property. An insurance-office might do it with a policy. They might consider that they had a moral security; but still it would be absurd. There is something absurd in your lordship having to raise money. Don't you think I could see these people," said Mr. Giles, "and talk to them, and gain a little time? We only want a little time."

"No," said Lothair, in a peremptory tone. "I said I would do it, and it must be done, and at once. Sooner than there should be delay, I would rather go into the street, as you suggest, and ask the first man I met to lend me the money. My word has been given, and I do not care what I pay to fulfil my word."

"We must not think of such things," said Mr. Giles, shaking his head. "All I want your lordship to understand is the exact position. In this case we have no security. Roundells, Giles, and Roundell cannot move without security. It would be
against our articles of partnership. But
Mr. Giles, as a private individual, may do
what he likes. I will let your lordship
have the money, and I will take no security
whatever—not even a note of hand. All
that I will ask for is that your lordship
should write me a letter, saying you have
urgent need for a sum of money (mention-
ing amount) for an honorable purpose, in
which your feelings are deeply interested—
and that will do. If any thing happens to
your lordship before this time next year,
why, I think, the trustees could hardly re-
fuse repaying the money; and if they did,
why then," added Mr. Giles, "I suppose it
will be all the same a hundred years hence.

"You have conferred on me the greatest
obligation," said Lothair, with much earn-
estness. "Language cannot express what I
feel. I am not too much used to kindness,
and I only hope that I may live to show my
sense of yours."

"It is really no great affair, my lord," said Mr. Giles.
"I did not wish to make difficulties, but it was my duty to put the
matter clearly before you. What I propose
to do is really nothing. I could do no less;
I should have felt quite absurd if your lord-
ship had gone into the money-market."

"I only hope," repeated Lothair, rising
and offering Mr. Giles his hand, "that life
may give me some occasion to prove my
gratitude."

"Well, my lord," replied Mr. Giles,
"if your lordship wish to repay me for any
little interest I have shown in your affairs,
you can do that, over and over again, and
at once."

"How so?"

"By a very great favor, by which Mrs.
Giles and myself would be deeply gratified.
We have a few friends who honor us by
dining with us to-day in Hyde Park Gar-
dens. If your lordship would add the great
distinction of your presence—"

"I should only be too much honored," exclaimed Lothair: "I suppose about eight,"
and he left the room; and Mr. Giles tele-
graphed instantly the impending event to
Apollonia.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a great day for Apollonia; not
only to have Lothair at her right hand at
dinner, but the prospect of receiving a car-
dinal in the evening. But she was equal to
it; though so engrossed, indeed, in the im-
mediate gratification of her hopes and wishes,
that she could scarcely dwell sufficiently on
the coming scene of triumph and social ex-
citement.

The repast was sumptuous; Lothair
thought the dinner would never end, there
were so many dishes, and apparently all of
the highest pretension. But if his simple
tastes had permitted him to take an interest
in these details, which they did not, he
would have been assisted by a gorgeous
menu of gold and white typography, that
was by the side of each guest. The table
seemed literally to groan under vases and
gigantic flagons, and, in its midst, rose a
mountain of silver, on which apparently all
the cardinal virtues, several of the pagan
deities, and Britannia herself, illustrated
with many lights a glowing inscription,
which described the fervent feelings of a
grateful client.

There were many guests—the Dowager
of Farringford, a lady of quality, Apol-
lonia's great lady, who exercised under this
roof much social tyranny; in short, was ra-
ther fine; but who, on this occasion, was
somewhat cowed by the undreamt-of pres-
ence of Lothair. She had not yet met
him, and probably never would have met
him, had she not had the good fortune of
dining at his lawyer's. However, Lady
Farringford was placed a long way from Lo-
thair, having been taken down to dinner by
Mr. Giles; and so, by the end of the first
course, Lady Farringford had nearly re-
sumed her customary despotie vein, and was
beginning to indulge in several kind obser-
vations, cheapening to her host and hostess,
and indirectly exalting herself; upon which
Mr. Giles took an early easy opportunity of
apprising Lady Farringford, that she had
nearly met Cardinal Grandison at dinner,
and that his eminence would certainly pay
his respects to Mrs. Putney Giles in the
evening. As Lady Farringford was at present a high ritualist, and had even been talked of as “going to Rome,” this intelligence was stunning, and it was observed that her ladyship was unusually subdued during the whole of the second course.

On the right of Lothair sat the wife of a vice-chancellor, a quiet and pleasing lady, to whom Lothair, with natural good breeding, paid snatches of happy attention, when he could for a moment with propriety withdraw himself from the blaze of Apollonia’s conversating conversation. Then there was a rather fierce-looking Red Ribbon, medalled, as well as be-starred, and the Red Ribbon’s wife, with a blushing daughter, in spite of her parentage not yet accustomed to stand fire. A partner and his unusually numerous family had the pleasure also of seeing Lothair for the first time, and there were no less than four M. P.s, one of whom was even in office.

Apollonia was stating to Lothair, with perspicuity, the reasons which quite induced her to believe that the Gulf-Stream had changed its course, and the political and social consequences that might accrue.

“The religious sentiment of the Southern races must be wonderfully affected by a more rigorous climate,” said Apollonia. “I cannot doubt,” she continued, “that a series of severe winters at Rome might put an end to Romanism”.

“But is there any fear that a reciprocal influence might be exercised on the Northern nations?” inquired Lothair. “Would there be any apprehension of our Protestantism becoming proportionately relaxed?”

“Of course not,” said Apollonia. “Truth cannot be affected by climate. Truth is truth, alike in Palestine and Scandinavia.”

“I wonder what the cardinal would think of this,” said Lothair, “who, you tell me, is coming to you this evening?”

“Yes, I am most interested to see him, though he is the most puissaint of our foes. Of course he would take refuge in sophistry; and science, you know, they deny,”

“Cardinal Grandison is giving some lectures on science,” said the vice-chancellor’s lady, quietly.

“It is remorse,” said Apollonia. “Their clever men can never forget that unfortunate affair of Galileo, and think they can divert the indignation of the nineteenth century by mock zeal about red sandstone or the origin of species.”

“And are you afraid of the Gulf-Stream?” inquired Lothair of his calmer neighbor.

“I think we want more evidence of a change. The vice-chancellor and myself went down to a place we have near town, on Saturday, where there is a very nice piece of water; indeed, some people call it a lake; but it was quite frozen, and my boys wanted to skate, but that I would not permit.”

“You believe in the Gulf-Stream to that extent,” said Lothair—“no skating.”

The cardinal came early; the ladies had not long left the dining-room. They were agitated when his name was announced; even Apollonia’s heart beat; but then that might be accounted for by the inopportune recollection of an occasional correspondence with Caprera.

Nothing could exceed the simple suavity with which the cardinal appeared, approached, and greeted them. He thanked Apollonia for her permission to pay his respects to her, which he had long wished to do; and then they were all presented, and he said exactly the right thing to every one. He must have heard of them all before, or read their characters in their countenances. In a few minutes they were all listening to his eminence with enchanted ease, as sitting on the sofa by his hostess, he described to them the ambassadors who had just arrived from Japan, and with whom he had relations of interesting affairs. The Japanese Government had exhibited enlightened kindness to some of his poor people who had barely escaped martyrdom. Much might be expected from the Mikado, evidently a man of singular penetration and elevated views; and his eminence looked as if the mission of Yokohama would speedily end in an episcopal see; but he knew where he was, and studiously avoided all controversial matter.

After all, the Mikado himself was not more remarkable than this prince of the Church in a Tyburnian drawing-room, habited in his pink cassock and cape, and wav-
ing, as he spoke, with careless grace, his pink barrette.

The ladies thought the gentlemen rejoined them too soon; but Mr. Giles, when he was apprised of the arrival of the cardinal, thought it right to precipitate the symposium. With great tact, when the cardinal rose to greet him, Mr. Giles withdrew his eminence from those surrounding, and, after a brief interchange of whispered words, quitted him, and then brought forward and presented Lothair to the cardinal, and left them.

"This is not the first time that we should have met," said the cardinal; "but my happiness is so great at this moment that, though I deplore, I will not dwell on the past."

"I am, nevertheless, grateful to you, sir, for many services, and have more than once contemplated taking the liberty of personally assuring your eminence of my gratitude."

"I think we might sit down," said the cardinal, looking around; and then he led Lothair into an open but interior saloon, where none were yet present, and where they seated themselves on a sofa, and were soon engaged in apparently interesting converse.

In the mean time the world gradually filled the principal saloon of Apollonia, and, when it approached overflowing, occasionally some persons passed the line, and entered the room in which the cardinal and his ward were seated, and then, as if consciences of violating some sacred place, drew back. Others, on the contrary, with coarser curiosity, were induced to invade the chamber from the mere fact that the cardinal was to be seen there.

"My geographical instinct," said the cardinal to Lothair, "assures me that I can regain the staircase through these rooms, without rejoining the busy world; so I shall bid you good-night, and even presume to give you my blessing;" and his eminence glided away.

When Lothair returned to the saloon it was so crowded that he was not observed; exactly what he liked; and he stood against the wall watching all that passed, not with-out amusement. A lively, social parasite, who had dined there, and had thanked his stars at dinner that Fortune had decreed he should meet Lothair, had been cruising for his prize all the time that Lothair had been conversing with the cardinal, and was soon at his side.

"A strange scene this!" said the parasite.

"Is it unusual?" inquired Lothair.

"Such a medley! How they can be got together, I marvel—priests and philosophers, legitimists, and carbonari! Wonderful woman, Mrs. Putney Giles!"

"She is very entertaining," said Lothair, "and seems to me clever."

"Remarkably so," said the parasite, who had been on the point of satirizing his hostess, but, observing the quarter of the wind, with rapidity went in for praise. "An extraordinary woman. Your lordship had a long talk with the cardinal."

"I had the honor of some conversation with Cardinal Grandison," said Lothair, drawing up.

"I wonder what the cardinal would have said if he had met Mazzini here?"

"Mazzini! Is he here?"

"Not now; but I have seen him here," said the parasite, "and our host such a Tory! That makes the thing so amusing;" and then the parasite went on making small personal observations on the surrounding scene, and every now and then telling little tales of great people with whom, it appeared, he was intimate—all concerted fire to gain the very great social fortress he was now besieging. The parasite was so full of himself, and so anxious to display himself to advantage, that with all his practice it was some time before he perceived he did not make all the way he could wish with Lothair; who was courteous, but somewhat monosyllabic and absent.

"Your lordship is struck by that face?" said the parasite.

Was Lothair struck by that face? And what was it?

He had exchanged glances with that face during the last ten minutes, and the mutual expression was not one of sympathy but curiosity blended, on the part of the face,
with an expression, if not of disdain, of extreme reserve.

It was the face of a matron, apparently of not many summers, for her shapely figure was still slender, though her mien was stately. But it was the countenance that had commanded the attention of Lothair: pale, but perfectly Attic in outline, with the short upper lip and the round chin, and a profusion of dark-chestnut hair bound by a Grecian fillet, and on her brow a star.

"Yes, I am struck by that face. Who is it?"

"If your lordship could only get a five-franc piece of the last French Republic, 1850, you would know. I dare say the money-changers could get you one. All the artists of Paris, painters, and sculptors, and medalists, were competing to produce a face worthy of representing 'La République française;' nobody was satisfied, when Oudine caught a girl of not seventeen, and, with a literal reproduction of Nature, gained the prize with unanimity."

"Ah!"

"And, though years have passed, the countenance has not changed; perhaps improved."

"It is a countenance that will bear, perhaps even would require, maturity," said Lothair; "but she is no longer 'La République française;' what is she now?"

"She is called Theodora, though married, I believe, to an Englishman, a friend of Garibaldi. Her birth unknown; some say an Italian, some a Pole; all sorts of stories. But she speaks every language, is ultra-cosmopolitan, and has invented a new religion."

"A new religion!"

"Would your lordship care to be introduced to her?" I know her enough for that. Shall we go up to her?"

"I have made so many new acquaintances to-day," said Lothair, as it were starting from a reverie, "and indeed heard so many new things, that I think I had better say good-night;" and he graciously retired.

CHAPTER IX.

About the same time that Lothair had repaired to the residence of Mr. Giles, Monsignore Berwick, whose audience of the cardinal in the morning had preceded that of the legal adviser of the trustees, made his way toward one of the noblest mansions in St. James's Square, where resided Lord St. Jerome.

It was a mild winter evening; a little fog still hanging about, but vanquished by the cheerful lamps, and the voice of the muffin-bell was just heard at intervals; a genial sound that calls up visions of trim and happy hearths. If we could only so contrive our lives as to go into the country for the first note of the nightingale, and return to town for the first note of the muffin-bell, existence, it is humbly presumed, might be more enjoyable.

Monsignore Berwick was a young man, but looking younger from a countenance almost of childhood; fair, with light-blue eyes, and flaxen hair and delicate features. He was the last person you would have fixed upon as a born Roman; but Nature, in one of the freaks of race, had resolved that his old Scottish blood should be reasserted, though his ancestors had sedulously blended it, for many generations, with that of the princely houses of the eternal city. The monsignore was the greatest statesman of Rome, formed and favored by Antonelli, and probably his successor.

The mansion of Lord St. Jerome was a real family mansion, built by his ancestors a century and a half ago, when they believed that, from its central position, its happy contiguity to the court, the senate, and the seats of government, they at last, in St. James's Square, had discovered a site which could defy the vicissitudes of fashion, and not share the fate of the river palaces, which they had been obliged in turn to relinquish. And in a considerable degree they were right in their anticipation; for, although they have somewhat unwisely permitted the clubs to invade too successfully their territory, St. James's Square may be looked upon as our Fanbourg St. Germain,
and a great patrician residing there dwells in the heart of that free and noble life of which he ought to be a part.

A marble hall and a marble stair-case, lofty chambers with silk or tapestried hangings, gilded cornices, and painted ceilings, gave a glimpse of almost Venetian splendor, and rare in our metropolitan houses of this age; but the first dwellers in St. James's Square had tender and inspiring recollections of the Adrian bride, had frolicked in St. Mark's, and gilded in adventurous gondolas. The monsignore was ushered into a chamber bright with lights and a blazing fire, and welcomed with extreme cordiality by his hostess, who was then alone. Lady St. Jerome was still the young wife of a nobleman not old. She was the daughter of a Protestant house, but, during a residence at Rome after her marriage, she had reverted to the ancient faith, which she professed with the enthusiastic convictions of a convert. Her whole life was dedicated to the triumph of the Catholic cause; and, being a woman of considerable intelligence and of an ardent mind, she had become a recognized power in the great confederacy which has so much influenced the human race, and which has yet to play perhaps a mighty part in the fortunes of the world.

"I was in great hopes that the cardinal would have met you at dinner," said Lady St. Jerome, "but he wrote only this afternoon to say unexpected business would prevent him, but he would be here in the evening, though late."

"It must be something sudden, for I was with his eminence this morning, and he then contemplated our meeting here."

"Nothing from abroad?"

"I should think not, or it would be known to me. There is nothing new from abroad this afternoon: my time has been spent in writing, not receiving, dispatches."

"And all well, I hope?"

"This Scotch business plagues us. So far as Scotland is concerned, it is quite ripe; but the cardinal counsels delay on account of this country, and he has such a consummate knowledge of England, that—"

At this moment Lord St. Jerome entered the room—a grave but gracious personage, polished but looking silent, though he immediately turned the conversation to the weather. The monsignore began dispatching English fogs; but Lord St. Jerome maintained that, on the whole, there were not more fogs in England than in any other country; "and as for the French," he added, "I like their audacity, for, when they revolutionized the calendar, they called one of their months Brumaire."

Then came in one of his lordship's chaplains, who saluted the monsignore with reverence, and immediately afterward a beautiful young lady, his niece, Clare Arundel.

The family were living in a convenient suite of small rooms on the ground-floor, called the winter-rooms, so dinner was announced by the doors of an adjoining chamber being thrown open, and there they saw, in the midst of a chamber hung with green silk and adorned with some fine cabinet pictures, a small round table, bright and glowing.

It was a lively dinner. Lord St. Jerome loved conversation, though he never conversed. "There must be an audience," he would say, "and I am the audience." The partner of his life, whom he never ceased admiring, had originally fascinated him by her conversational talents; and, even if Nature had not impelled her, Lady St. Jerome was too wise a woman to relinquish the spell. The monsignore could always, when necessary, sparkle with anecdote or blaze with repartee; and all the chaplains, who abounded in this house, were men of bright abilities, not merely men of reading, but of the world, learned in the world's ways, and trained to govern mankind by the versatility of their sympathies. It was a dinner where there could not be two conversations going on, and where even the silent take their share in the talk by their sympathy.

And among the silent, as silent even as Lord St. Jerome, was Miss Arundel; and yet her large violet eyes, darker even than her dark-brown hair, and gleaming with intelligence, and her rich face mantling with emotion, proved she was not insensible to the witty passages and the bright and interesting narratives that were sparkling and flowing about her.
The gentlemen left the dining-room with the ladies, in the Continental manner. Lady St. Jerome, who was leaning on the arm of the monsignore, guided him into a saloon farther than the one they had reentered, and then seating herself said, "You were telling me about Scotland, that you yourself thought it ripe."

"Unquestionably. The original plan was to have established our hierarchy when the Kirk split up; but that would have been a mistake, it was not then ripe. There would have been a fanatical reaction. There is always a tendency that way in Scotland: as it is, at this moment, the Establishment and the Free Kirk are mutually sighing for some compromise which may bring them together again; and, if the proprietors would give up their petty patronage, some flatter themselves it might be arranged. But we are thoroughly well informed, and have provided for all this. We sent two of our best men into Scotland some time ago, and they have invented a new church, called the United Presbyterians. John Knox himself was never more violent, or more mischievous. The United Presbyterians will do the business: they will render Scotland simply impossible to live in; and then, when the crisis arrives, the distracted and despairing millions will find refuge in the bosom of their only mother. That is why, at home, we wanted no delay in the publication of the bull and the establishment of the hierarchy."

"But the cardinal says no?"

"And must be followed. For these islands he has no equal. He wishes great reserve at present. Affairs here are progressing, gradually but surely. But it is Ireland where matters are critical, or will be soon."

"Ireland! I thought there was a sort of understanding there—at least for the present."

The monsignore shook his head. "What do you think of an American invasion of Ireland?"

"An American invasion!"

"Even so; nothing more probable, and nothing more to be deprecated by us. Now that the civil war in America is over, the Irish soldiers are resolved to employ their experience and their weapons in their own land; but they have no thought for the interest of the Holy See, or the welfare of our holy religion. Their secret organization is tampering with the people and tampering with the priests. The difficulty of Ireland is that the priests and the people will consider every thing in a purely Irish point of view. To gain some local object, they will encourage the principles of the most lawless liberalism, which naturally land them in Fenianism and atheism. And the danger is not foreseen, because the Irish political object of the moment is alone looked to."

"But surely they can be guided?"

"We want a statesman in Ireland. We have never been able to find one; we want a man like the cardinal. But the Irish will have a native for their chief. We caught Churchill young, and educated him in the Propaganda; but he has disappointed us. At first all seemed well; he was reserved and austere; and we heard with satisfaction that he was unpopular. But, now that critical times are arriving, his peasant-blood cannot resist the contagion. He proclaims the absolute equality of all religions, and of the power of the state to confiscate ecclesiastical property, and not restore it to us, but alienate it forever. For the chance of subverting the Anglican Establishment, he is favoring a policy which will subvert religion itself. In his eagerness he cannot see that the Anglicans have only a lease of our property, a lease which is rapidly expiring."

"This is sad."

"It is perilous, and difficult to deal with. But it must be dealt with. The problem is to suppress Fenianism, and not to strengthen the Protestant confederacy."

"And you left Rome for this? We understood you were coming for something else," said Lady St. Jerome, in a significant tone.

"Yes, yes, I have been there, and I have seen him."

"And have you succeeded?"

"No; and no one will—at least at present."

"Is all lost, then? Is the Malta scheme again on the carpet?"

"Our Holy Church is built upon a
rock," said the monsignore, "but not upon the rock of Malta. Nothing is lost; Antonelli is calm and sanguine, though, rest assured, there is no doubt about what I tell you. France has washed her hands of us."

"Where, then, are we to look for aid?" exclaimed Lady St. Jerome, "against the assassins and atheists? Austria, the alternative ally, is no longer near you; and if she were—that I should ever live to say it—even Austria is our foe."

"Poor Austria!" said the monsignore with an unctuous sneer. "Two things made her a nation; she was German and she was Catholic, and now she is neither."

"But you alarm me, my dear lord, with your terrible news. We once thought that Spain would be our protector, but we hear bad news from Spain."

"Yes," said the monsignore, "I think it highly probable that, before a few years have elapsed, every government in Europe will be atheistical except France. Vanity will always keep France the eldest son of the Church, even if she wear a bonnet rouge. But, if the Holy Father keep Rome, these strange changes will only make the occupier of the chair of St. Peter more powerful. His subjects will be in every clime and every country, and then they will be only his subjects. We shall get rid of the difficulty of the divided allegiance, Lady St. Jerome, which plagued our poor forefathers so much."

"If we keep Rome," said Lady St. Jerome, "we shall. Let Christendom give us her prayers for the next few years, and Pio Nono will become the most powerful monarch in Europe, and perhaps the only one."

"I hear a sound," exclaimed Lady St. Jerome. "Yes! the cardinal has come. Let us greet him."

But as they were approaching the saloon the cardinal met them, and waved them back. "We will return," he said, "to our friends immediately, but I want to say one word to you both."

He made them sit down. "I am a little restless," he said, and stood before the fire, "Something interesting has happened; nothing to do with public affairs. Do not pitch your expectations too high—but still of importance, and certainly of great interest—at least to me. I have seen my child—my ward."

"Indeed an event!" said Lady St. Jerome, evidently much interested.

"And what is he like?" inquired the monsignore.

"All that one could wish. Extremely good-looking, highly bred, and most ingenuous; a considerable intelligence, and not untrained; but the most absolutely unaffected person I ever encountered."

"Ah! if he had been trained by your eminence," sighed Lady St. Jerome. "Is it too late?"

"'Tis an immense position," murmured Berwick.

"What good might he not do?" said Lady St. Jerome; "and if he be so ingenuous, it seems impossible that he can resist the truth."

"Your ladyship is a sort of cousin of his," said the cardinal, musingly.

"Yes; but very remote. I dare say he would not acknowledge the tie. But we are kin; we have the same blood in our veins."

"You should make his acquaintance," said the cardinal.

"I more than desire it. I hear he has been terribly neglected, brought up among the most dreadful people, entirely infidels and fanatics."

"He has been nearly two years at Oxford," said the cardinal. "That may have mitigated the evil."

"Ah! but you, my lord-cardinal, you must interfere. Now that you at last know him, you must undertake the great task; you must save him."

"We must all pray, as I pray every morn and every night," said the cardinal, "for the conversion of England."

"Or the conquest," murmured Berwick.
CHAPTER X.

As the cardinal was regaining his carriage on leaving Mrs. Giles's party, there was, about the entrance of the house, the usual gathering under such circumstances; some zealous linkboys marvellously familiar with London life, and some midnight loungers, who thus take their humble share of the social excitement, and their happy chance of becoming acquainted with some of the notables of the wondrous world of which they form the base. This little gathering, ranged at the instant into stricter order by the police to facilitate the passage of his eminence, prevented the progress of a passenger, who exclaimed in an audible, but not noisy voice, as if he were ejaculating to himself, "À bas les prêtres!"

This exclamation, unintelligible to the populace, was noticed only by the only person who understood it. The cardinal, astonished at the unusual sound—for, hitherto, he had always found the outer world of London civil, or at least indifferent—threw his penetrating glance at the passenger, and caught clearly the visage on which the lamplight fully shone. It was a square, sinewy face, closely shaven, with the exception of a small but thick mustache, brown as the well-cropped hair, and blending with the hazel eye; a calm, but determined countenance; clearly not that of an Englishman, for he wore ear-rings.

The carriage drove off, and the passenger, somewhat forcing his way through the clustering group, continued his course until he reached the cab-stand near the Marble Arch, when he engaged a vehicle and ordered to be driven to Leicester Square. That quarter of the town exhibits an animated scene toward the witching hour; many lights and much population, illuminated coffee-houses, the stir of a large theatre, bands of music in the open air, and other sounds, most of them gay, and some festive. The stranger, whose compact figure was shrouded by a long fur cape, had not the appearance of being influenced by the temptation of amusement. As he stopped in the square and looked around him, the expression of his countenance was moody, perhaps even anxious. He seemed to be making observations on the locality, and, after a few minutes, crossed the open space and turned up into a small street which opened into the square. In this street was a coffee-house of some pretension, connected indeed with an hotel, which had been formed out of two houses, and therefore possessed no inconsiderable accommodation.

The coffee-room was capacious, and adorned in a manner which intimated it was not kept by an Englishman, or much used by Englishmen. The walls were painted in frescoed arabesques. There were many guests, principally seated at small tables of marble, and on benches and chairs covered with a coarse crimson velvet. Some were sipping coffee, some were drinking wine, others were smoking or playing dominoes, or doing both; while many were engaged in reading the foreign journals which abounded.

An ever-vigilant waiter was at the side of the stranger the instant he entered, and wished to know his pleasure. The stranger was examining with his keen eye every individual in the room while this question was asked and repeated.

"What would I wish?" said the stranger, having concluded his inspection, and as it were summoning back his recollection. "I would wish to see, and at once, one Mr. Perroni, who, I believe, lives here."

"Why, 'tis the master!" exclaimed the waiter.

"Well, then, go and tell the master that I want him."

"But the master is much engaged," said the waiter—"particularly."

"I dare say; but you will go and tell him that I particularly want to see him."

The waiter, though prepared to be in-pertinent to any one else, felt that one was speaking to him who must be obeyed, and, with a subdued, but hesitating manner, said, "There is a meeting to-night up-stairs, where the master is secretary, and it is difficult to see him; but, if I could see him, what name am I to give?"

"You will go to him instantly," said the stranger, "and you will tell him that he is wanted by Captain Bruges."
The waiter was not long absent, and returning with an obsequious bow, he invited the stranger to follow him to a private room, where he was alone only for a few seconds, for the door opened and he was joined by Perroni.

"Ah! my general," exclaimed the master of the coffee-house, and he kissed the stranger's hand. "You received my telegram?"

"I am here. Now what is your business?"

"There is business, and great business, if you will do it; business for you."

"Well, I am a soldier, and soldiering is my trade, and I do not much care what I do in that way, provided it is not against the good cause. But I must tell you at once, friend Perroni, I am not a man who will take a leap in the dark. I must form my own staff, and I must have my commissariat secure."

"My general, you will be master of your own terms. The Standing Committee of the Holy Alliance of Peoples are sitting upstairs at this moment. They were unanimous in sending for you. See them; judge for yourself; and, rest assured, you will be satisfied."

"I do not much like having to do with committees," said the general. "However, let it be as you like—I will see them."

"I had better just announce your arrival," said Perroni. "And will you not take something, my general, after your travel? you must be wearied."

"A glass of sugar-and-water. You know, I am not easily tired. And, I agree with you, it is better to come to business at once: so prepare them."

CHAPTER XI.

The Standing Committee of the Holy Alliance of Peoples all rose, although they were extreme republicans, when the general entered. Such is the magical influence of a man of action over men of the pen and the tongue. Had it been, instead of a successful military leader, an orator who had inspired Europe, or a journalist who had established the rights of the human race, the Standing Committee would have only seen men of their own kidney, who, having been favored with happier opportunities than themselves, had reaped a harvest, which, equally favored, they might here have garnered.

"General," said Felix Drolin, the president, who was looked upon by the brotherhood as a statesman, for he had been, in his time, a member of a provisional government, "this seat is for you," and he pointed to one on his right hand. "You are ever welcome; and I hope you bring good tidings, and good fortune."

"I am glad to be among my friends, and I may say," looking around, "my comrades. I hope I may bring you better fortune than my tidings."

"But now they have left Rome," said the president, "every day we expect good news."

"Ay, ay! he has left Rome, but he has not left Rome with the door open. I hope it is not on such gossip you have sent for me. You have something on hand. What is it?"

"You shall hear it from the fountain-head," said the president, "fresh from New York," and he pointed to an individual seated in the centre of the table.

"Ah! Colonel Finucane," said the general, "I have not forgotten James River. You did that well. What is the trick now?"

Whereupon a tall, lean man, with a decided brogue, but speaking through his nose, rose from his seat and informed the general that the Irish people were organized and ready to rise; that they had sent their deputies to New York; all they wanted were arms and officers; that the American brethren had agreed to supply them with both, and amply; and that considerable subscriptions were raising for other purposes. What they now required was a commander-in-chief equal to the occasion, and in whom all would have confidence; and therefore they had telegraphed for the general.

"I doubt not our friends over the water
would send us plenty of rifles," said the general, "if we could only manage to land them; and, I think, I know men now in the States from whom I could form a good staff; but how about the people of Ireland? What evidence have we that they will rise, if we land?"

"The best," said the president. "We have a head-centre here, Citizen Desmond, who will give you the most recent and the most authentic intelligence on that head."

"The whole country is organized," said the head-centre; "we could put three hundred thousand men in the field at any time in a fortnight. The movement is not sectarian; it pervades all classes and all creeds. All that we want are officers and arms."

"Hem!" said the general; "and as to your other supplies? Any scheme of commissariat?"

"There will be no lack of means," replied the head-centre. "There is no country where so much money is hoarded as in Ireland. But, depend upon it, so far as the commissariat is concerned, the movement will be self-supporting."

"Well, we shall see," said the general; "I am sorry it is an Irish affair, though, to be sure, what else could it be? I am not fond of Irish affairs; whatever may be said, and however plausible things may look, in an Irish business there is always a priest at the bottom of it. I hate priests. By-the-bye, I was stopped on my way here by a cardinal getting into his carriage. I thought I had burnt all those vehicles when I was at Rome with Garibaldi in '48. A cardinal in his carriage! I had no idea you permitted that sort of cattle in London."

"London is a roost for every bird," said Felix Drolin.

"Very few of the priests favor this movement," said Desmond.

"Then you have a great power against you," said the general, in "addition to England."

"They are not exactly against; the bulk of them are too national for that; but Rome does not sanction—you understand?"

"I understand enough," said the general, "to see that we must not act with precipitation. An Irish business is a thing to be turned over several times."

"But yet," said a Pole, "what hope for humanity except from the rising of an oppressed nationality? We have offered ourselves on the altar, and in vain! Greece is too small, and Roumania—though both of them are ready to do any thing; but they would be the mere tools of Russia. Ireland alone remains, and she is at our feet."

"The peoples will never succeed till they have a fleet," said a German. "Then you could land as many rifles as you like, or any thing else. To have a fleet we rose against Denmark in my country, but we have been betrayed. Nevertheless, Germany will yet be united, and she can only be united as a republic. Then she will be the mistress of the seas."

"That is the mission of Italy," said Perroni. "Italy—with the traditions of Genoa, Venice, Pisa—Italy is plainly indicated as the future mistress of the seas."

"I beg your pardon," said the German; "the future mistress of the seas is the land of the viking. It is the forests of the Baltic that will build the fleet of the future. You have no timber in Italy."

"Timber is no longer wanted," said Perroni. "Nor do I know of what will be formed the fleets of the future. But the sovereignty of the seas depends upon seamen, and the nautical genius of the Italians—"

"Comrades," said the general, "we have disussed to-night a great subject. For my part I have travelled rather briskly, as you wished it. I should like to sleep on this affair."

"'Tis most reasonable," said the president. "Our refreshment at council is very spare," he continued, and he pointed to a vase of water and some glasses ranged round it in the middle of the table; "but we always drink one toast, general, before we separate. It is to one whom you love, and whom you have served well. Fill glasses, brethren, and now 'To Mary-Anne!'"

If they had been inspired by the grape, nothing could be more animated and even excited than all their countenances suddenly became. The cheer might have been
heard in the coffee-room, as they expressed, in the phrases of many languages, the never-failing and never-flagging enthusiasm invoked by the toast of their mistress.

CHAPTER XII.

"Did you read that paragraph, mamma?" inquired Lady Corisande of the duchess, in a tone of some seriousness.

"I did."

"And what did you think of it?"

"It filled me with so much amazement that I have hardly begun to think."

"And Bertram never gave a hint of such things!"

"Let us believe they are quite untrue."

"I hope Bertram is in no danger," said his sister.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the mother, with unaffected alarm.

"I know not how it is," said Lady Corisande, "but I frequently feel that some great woe is hanging over our country."

"You must dismiss such thoughts, my child; they are fanciful."

"But they will come, and when least expected—frequently in church, but also in the sunshine; and when I am riding too, when, once, every thing seemed gay. But now I often think of strife, and struggle, and war—civil war: the stir of our caval-cade seems like the tramp of cavalry."

"You indulge your imagination too much, dear Corisande. When you return to London, and enter the world, these anxious thoughts will fly."

"Is it imagination? I should rather have doubted my being of an imaginative nature. It seems to me that I am rather literal. But I cannot help hearing things, and reading things, and observing things, and they fill me with disquietude. All seems doubt and change, when it would appear that we require both faith and firmness."

"The duke is not alarmed about affairs," said his wife.

"And, if all did their duty like papa, there might be less, or no cause," said Cori-
art, or letters, or manners, or even political affairs, Lothair seemed to listen to one of the wisest, most enlightened, and most agreeable of men. There was only one subject on which his eminence seemed scrupulous never to touch, and that was religion; or so indirectly, that it was only when alone that Lothair frequently found himself musing over the happy influence on the arts, and morals, and happiness of mankind—of the Church.

In due time, not too soon, but when he was attuned to the initiation, the cardinal presented Lothair to Lady St. Jerome. The impassioned eloquence of that lady germinated the seed which the cardinal had seemed so carelessly to scatter. She was a woman to inspire crusaders. Not that she ever condescended to vindicate her own particular faith, or spoke as if she were conscious that Lothair did not possess it. Assuming that religion was true, for otherwise man would be in a more degraded position than the beasts of the field, which are not aware of their own wretchedness, then religion should be the principal occupation of man, to which all other pursuits should be subservient. The doom of eternity, and the fortunes of life, cannot be placed in competition. Our days should be pure, and holy, and heroic—full of noble thoughts and solemn sacrifice. Providence, in its wisdom, had decreed that the world should be divided between the faithful and atheists; the latter even seemed to predominate. There was no doubt that, if they prevailed, all that elevated man would become extinct. It was a great trial; but happy was the man who was privileged even to endure the awful test. It might develop the highest qualities and the most sublime conduct. If he were equal to the occasion, and could control and even subdue these sons of Korah, he would rank with Michael the Archangel.

This was the text on which frequent discourses were delivered to Lothair, and to which he listened at first with eager, and soon with enraptured attention. The priestess was worthy of the shrine. Few persons were ever gifted with more natural eloquence; a command of language, choice without being pedantic; beautiful hands that fluttered with irresistible grace; flashing eyes and a voice of melody.

Lothair began to examine himself, and to ascertain whether he possessed the necessary qualities, and was capable of sublime conduct. His natural modesty and his strong religious feeling struggled together. He feared he was not an archangel, and yet he longed to struggle with the powers of darkness.

One day he ventured to express to Miss Arundel a somewhat hopeful view of the future, but Miss Arundel shook her head.

"I do not agree with my aunt, at least as regards this country," said Miss Arundel; "I think our sins are too great. We left His Church, and God is now leaving us."

Lothair looked grave, but was silent.

Weeks had passed since his introduction to the family of Lord St. Jerome, and it was remarkable how large a portion of his subsequent time had passed under that roof. At first there were few persons in town, and really of these Lothair knew none; and then the house in St. James's Square was not only an interesting but it was an agreeable house. All Lady St. Jerome's family connections were persons of much fashion, so there was more variety and entertainment than sometimes are to be found under a Roman Catholic roof. Lady St. Jerome was at home every evening before Easter. Few dames can venture successfully on so decided a step; but her saloons were always attended, and by "nice people." Occasionally the cardinal stepped in, and, to a certain degree, the saloon was the rendezvous of the Catholic party; but it was also generally social and distinguished. Many bright dames and damsels, and many influential men, were there, who little deemed that deep and daring thoughts were there masked by many a gracious countenance. The social atmosphere infinitely pleased Lothair. The mixture of solemn duty and graceful diversion, high purposes and charming manners, seemed to realize some youthful dreams of elegant existence. All, too, was enhanced by the historic character of the roof and by the recollection that their mutual ancestors, as Clare Arundel more than once intimated to him, had created
England. Having had so many pleasant dinners in St. James's Square, and spent there so many evening hours, it was not wonderful that Lothair had accepted an invitation from Lord St. Jerome to pass Easter at his country-seat.

CHAPTER XIII.

VAUXE, the seat of the St. Jeromes, was the finest specimen of the old English residence extant. It was the perfection of the style, which had gradually arisen after the Wars of the Roses had alike destroyed all the castles and the purpose of those stern erections. People said Vauxe looked like a college: the truth is, colleges looked like Vauxe, for, when those fair and civil buildings rose, the wise and liberal spirits who endowed them intended that they should resemble, as much as possible, the residence of a great noble.

There were two quadrangles at Vauxe of gray-stone; the outer one of larger dimensions and much covered with ivy; the inner one not so extensive, but more ornate, with a lofty tower, a hall, and a chapel. The house was full of galleries, and they were full of portraits. Indeed there was scarcely a chamber in this vast edifice of which the walls were not breathing with English history in this interesting form. Sometimes more ideal art asserted a triumphant claim —transcendental Holy Families, seraphic saints, and gorgeous scenes by Tintoret and Paul of Verona.

The furniture of the house seemed never to have been changed. It was very old, somewhat scanty, but very rich—tapestry and velvet hangings, marvellous cabinets, and crystal girandoles. Here and there a group of ancient plate; ewers and flagons and tall salt-cellars, a foot high and richly chiselled; sometimes a state bed shadowed with a huge pomp of stiff brocade and borne by silver poles.

Vauxe stood in a large park, studded with stately trees; here and there an avenue of Spanish chestnuts or a grove of oaks; sometimes a gorse dell, and sometimes a great spread of antlered fern, taller than the tallest man.

It was only twenty miles from town, and Lord St. Jerome drove Lothair down; the last ten miles through a pretty land, which, at the right season, would have been bright with orchards, oak-woods, and hop-gardens. Lord St. Jerome loved horses, and was an eminent whip. He had driven four-in-hand when a boy, and he went on driving four-in-hand; not because it was the fashion, but because he loved it. Toward the close of Lent, Lady St. Jerome and Clare Arundel had been at a convent in retreat, but they always passed Holy Week at home, and they were to welcome Lord St. Jerome again at Vauxe.

The day was bright, the mode of movement exhilarating, all the anticipated incidents delightful, and Lothair felt the happiness of health and youth.

"There is Vauxe," said Lord St. Jerome, in a tone of proud humility, as a turn in the road first displayed the stately pile.

"How beautiful!" said Lothair. "Ah! our ancestors understood the country."

"I used to think when I was a boy," said Lord St. Jerome, "that I lived in the prettiest village in the world; but these railroads have so changed every thing that Vauxe seems to me now only a second town-house."

The ladies were in a garden, where they were consulting with the gardener and Father Coleman about the shape of some new beds, for the critical hour of filling them was approaching. The gardener, like all head-gardeners, was opinionated. Living always at Vauxe, he had come to believe that the gardens belonged to him, and that the family were only occasional visitors; and he treated them accordingly. The lively and impetuous Lady St. Jerome had a thousand bright fancies, but her morose attendant never indulged them. She used to deplore his tyranny with piteous playfulness. "I suppose," she would say, "it is useless to resist, for I observe 'tis the same everywhere. Lady Roehampton says she never has her way with her gardens. It is no use speaking to Lord St. Jerome, for, though he is afraid of nothing else, I am sure he is afraid of Hawkins."
The only way that Lady St. Jerome could manage Hawkins was through Father Coleman. Father Coleman, who knew every thing, knew a great deal about gardens; from the days of Le Notre to those of the fine gentlemen who now travel about, and when disengaged deign to give us advice.

Father Coleman had only just entered middle-age, was imperturbable and mild in his manner. He passed his life very much at Vaux, and imparted a great deal of knowledge to Mr. Hawkins, without apparently being conscious of so doing. At the bottom of his mind, Mr. Hawkins felt assured that he had gained several distinguished prizes, mainly through the hints and guidance of Father Coleman; and thus, though on the surface a little surly, he was ruled by Father Coleman, under the combined influence of self-interest and superior knowledge.

"You find us in a garden without flowers," said Lady St. Jerome; "but the sun, I think, always love these golden yews."

"These are for you, dear uncle," said Clare Arundel, as she gave him a rich cluster of violets. "Just now the woods are more fragrant than the gardens, and these are the produce of our morning walk. I could have brought you some primroses, but I do not like to mix violets with any thing."

"They say primroses make a capital salad," said Lord St. Jerome.

"Barbarian!" exclaimed Lady St. Jerome. "I see you want luncheon; it must be ready;" and she took Lothair's arm. "I will show you a portrait of one of your ancestors," she said; "he married an Arundel."

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CHAPTER XIV.

"Now, you know," said Lady St. Jerome to Lothair in a hushed voice, as they sat together in the evening, "you are to be quite free here; to do exactly what you like, and we shall follow our ways. If you like to have a clergyman of your own Church visit you while you are with us, pray say so without the slightest scruple. We have an excellent gentleman in this parish; he often dines here; and I am sure he would be most happy to attend you. I know that Holy Week is not wholly disregarded by some of the Anglicans."

"It is the anniversary of the greatest event of time," said Lothair; "and I should be sorry if any of my church did not entirely regard it, though they may show that regard in a way different from your own."

"Yes, yes," murmured Lady St. Jerome; "there should be no difference between our Churches, if things were only properly understood. I would accept all who really bow to the name of Christ; they will come to the Church at last; they must. It is the atheists alone, I fear, who are now carrying every thing before them, and against whom there is no comfort, except the rock of St. Peter."

Miss Arundel crossed the room, whispered something to her aunt, and touched her forehead with her lips, and then left the apartment.

"We must soon separate, I fear," said Lady St. Jerome; "we have an office to-night of great moment; the Tenebrae commence to-night. You have, I think, nothing like it; but you have services throughout this week."

"I am sorry to say I have not attended them," said Lothair. "I did at Oxford; but I don't know how it is, but in London there seems no religion. And yet, as you sometimes say, religion is the great business of life; I sometimes begin to think the only business."

"Yes, yes," said Lady St. Jerome, with much interest, "if you believe that you are safe. I wish you had a clergyman near you while you are here. See Mr. Claughton, if you like; I would; and, if you do not, there is Father Coleman. I cannot convey to you how satisfactory conversation is with him on religious matters. He is the holiest of men, and yet he is a man of the world; he will not invite you into any controversies. He will speak with you only on points on which we agree. You know there are many points on which we agree?"

"Happily," said Lothair. "And now about the office to-night: tell me about
these Tenebrae. Is there any thing in the Tenebrae why I ought not to be present?"

"No reason whatever; not a dogma which you do not believe; not a ceremony of which you cannot approve. There are Psalms, at the end of which a light on the altar is extinguished. There is the Song of Moses, the Canticle of Zachary, the Misere-}re—which is the 50th Psalm you read and chant regularly in your church—the Lord's Prayer in silence; and then all is darkness and distress—what the Church was when our Lord suffered, what the whole world is now except His Church."

"If you will permit me," said Lothair, "I will accompany you to the Tenebrae."

Although the chapel at Vaux was, of course, a private chapel, it was open to the surrounding public, who eagerly availed themselves of a permission alike politic and gracious.

Nor was that remarkable. Manifold art had combined to make this exquisite temple, and to guide all its ministrations. But to-night it was not the radiant altar and the splendor of stately priests, the processions and the incense, the divine choir and the celestial harmonies resounding and lingering in arched roofs, that attracted many a neighbor. The altar was desolate, the choir was dumb; and while the services proceeded in hushed tones of subdued sorrow, and sometimes even of suppressed anguish, gradually, with each psalm and canticle, a light of the altar was extinguished, till at length the Misereere was muttered, and all became darkness. A sound as of a distant and rising wind was heard, and a crash, as it were the fall of trees in a storm. The earth is covered with darkness, and the vail of the temple is rent. But just at this moment of extreme woe, when all human voices are silent, and when it is forbidden even to breathe "Amen"—when every thing is symbolical of the confusion and despair of the Church at the loss of her ex-}piring Lord—a priest brings forth a concealed light of silvery flame from a corner of the altar. This is the light of the world, and announces the resurrection, and then all rise up and depart in silence.

As Lothair rose, Miss Arundel passed him with streaming eyes.

"There is nothing in this holy office," said Father Coleman to Lothair, "to which every real Christian might not give his assent."

"Nothing," said Lothair, with great de-}cision.

CHAPTER XV.

There were Tenebrae on the following days, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday; and Lothair was present on both occasions.

"There is also a great office on Friday," said Father Coleman to Lothair, "which perhaps you would not like to attend—the mass of the pre-sanctified. We bring back the blessed sacrament to the desolate altar, and unveil the cross. It is one of our highest ceremonies, the adoration of the cross, which the Protestants persist in calling idolatry, though I presume they will give us leave to know the meaning of our own words and actions, and hope they will believe us when we tell them that our genu-}flexions and kissing of the cross are no more than exterior expressions of that love which we bear in our hearts to Jesus crucified; and that the words adoration and adore, as applied to the cross, only signify that respect and veneration due to things immediately relating to God and His service."

"I see no idolatry in it," said Lothair, musingly.

"No impartial person could," rejoined Father Coleman; "but unfortunately all these prejudices were imbibed when the world was not so well informed as at present. A good deal of mischief has been done, too, by the Protestant versions of the Holy Scriptures; made in a hurry, and by men imperfectly acquainted with the Eastern tongues, and quite ignorant of Eastern man-}ners. All the accumulated research and in-}vestigation of modern times have only illus-}trated and justified the offices of the Church."

"That is very interesting," said Lothair.

"Now, this question of idolatry," said Father Coleman, "that is a fertile subject
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of misconception. The house of Israel was raised up to destroy idolatry because idolatry then meant dark images of Moloch opening their arms by machinery, and flinging the beauteous first-born of the land into their huge forms, which were furnaces of fire; or Ashtaroth, throned in moonlit groves, and surrounded by orgies of ineffable demoralization. It required the declared will of God to redeem man from such fatal iniquity, which would have sapped the human race. But to confound such deeds with the commemoration of God's saints, who are only pictured because their lives are perpetual incentives to purity and holiness, and to declare that the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of God should be to human feeling only as a sister of charity or a gleaner in the fields, is to abuse reason and to outrage the heart.

"We live in dark times," said Lothair, with an air of distress.

"Not darker than before the deluge," exclaimed Father Coleman; "not darker than before the nativity; not darker even than when the saints became martyrs. There is a Pharos in the world, and its light will never be extinguished, however black the clouds and wild the waves. Man is on his trial now, not the Church; but in the service of the Church his highest energies may be developed, and his noblest qualities proved."

Lothair seemed plunged in thought, and Father Coleman glided away as Lady St. Jerome entered the gallery, shawled and bonneted, accompanied by another priest, Monsignore Catesby.

Catesby was a youthful member of an ancient English house, which for many generations had without a murmur, rather in a spirit of triumph, made every worldly sacrifice for the Church and court of Rome. For that cause they had forfeited their lives, broad estates, and all the honors of a lofty station in their own land. Reginald Catesby, with considerable abilities, trained with consummate skill, inherited their determined will, and the traditionary beauty of their form and countenance. His manners were winning, and he was as well informed in the ways of the world as he was in the works of the great casuists.

"My lord has ordered the char-à-banc, and is going to drive us all to Chart, where we will lunch," said Lady St. Jerome; "'tis a curious place, and was planted, only seventy years ago, by my lord's grandfather, entirely with spruce-firs, but with so much care and skill, giving each plant and tree ample distance, that they have risen to the noblest proportions, with all their green branches far-spreading on the ground like huge fans."

It was only a drive of three or four miles entirely in the park. This was a district that had been added to the ancient enclosure—a striking scene. It was a forest of firs, but quite unlike such as might be met with in the north of Europe or of America. Every tree was perfect—huge and complete, and full of massy grace. Nothing else was permitted to grow there except juniper, of which there were abundant and wondrous groups, green and spiral; the whole contrasting with the tall brown fern, of which there were quantities about, cut for the deer.

The turf was dry and mossy, and the air pleasant. It was a balmy day. They sat down by the great trees, the servants opened the luncheon-baskets, which were a present from Balmoral. Lady St. Jerome was seldom seen to greater advantage than distributing her viands under such circumstances. Never was such gay and graceful hospitality. Lothair was quite fascinated as she playfully thrust a paper of lobster-sandwiches into his hand, and enjoined Monsignore Catesby to fill his tumbler with Chablis.

"I wish Father Coleman were here," said Lothair to Miss Arundel.

"Why?" said Miss Arundel.

"Because we were in the midst of a very interesting conversation on idolatry and on worship in groves, when Lady St. Jerome summoned us to our drive. This seems a grove where one might worship."

"Father Coleman ought to be at Rome," said Miss Arundel. "He was to have passed Holy Week there. I know not why he changed his plans."

"Are you angry with him for it?"

"No, not angry; but surprised; surprised
that any one might be at Rome, and yet be absent from it.”

“You like Rome?”

“I have never been there. It is the wish of my life.”

“May I say to you what you said to me just now—why?”

“Naturally, because I would wish to witness the ceremonies of the Church in their most perfect form.”

“But they are fulfilled in this country, I have heard, with much splendor and precision.”

Miss Arundel shook her head.

“Oh! no,” she said; “in this country we are only just emerging from the catacombs. If the ceremonies of the Church were adequately fulfilled in England, we should hear very little of English infidelity.”

“That is saying a great deal,” observed Lothair, inquiringly.

“Had I that command of wealth of which we hear so much in the present day, and with which the possessors seem to know so little what to do, I would purchase some of those squalid streets in Westminster, which are the shame of the metropolis, and clear a great space and build a real cathedral, where the worship of heaven should be perpetually conducted in the full spirit of the ordinances of the Church. I believe, were this done, even this country might be saved.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Lothair began to meditate on two great ideas—the reconciliation of Christendom, and the influence of architecture on religion. If the differences between the Roman and Anglican Churches, and between the papacy and Protestantism generally arose, as Father Coleman assured him, and seemed to prove, in mere misconception, reconciliation, though difficult, did not seem impossible, and appeared to be one of the most efficient modes of defeating the atheists. It was a result which, of course, mainly depended on the authority of Reason; but the power of the imagination might also be enlisted in the good cause through the influence of the fine arts, of which the great mission is to excite, and at the same time elevate, the feelings of the human family. Lothair found himself frequently in a reverie over Miss Arundel’s ideal fane; and, feeling that he had the power of buying up a district in forlorn Westminster, and raising there a temple to the living God, which might influence the future welfare of millions, and even effect the salvation of his country, he began to ask himself whether he could incur the responsibility of shrinking from the fulfilment of this great duty.

Lothair could not have a better adviser on the subject of the influence of architecture on religion than Monsignore Catesby. Monsignore Catesby had been a pupil of Pugin; his knowledge of ecclesiastical architecture was only equalled by his exquisite taste. To hear him expound the mysteries of symbolical art, and expatiate on the hidden revelations of its beauteous forms, reached even to ecstasy. Lothair hung upon his accents like a neophyte. Conferences with Father Coleman on those points of faith on which they did not differ, followed up by desultory remarks on those points of faith on which they ought not to differ—critical discussions with Monsignore Catesby on cathedrals, their forms, their purposes, and the instances in several countries in which those forms were most perfect, and those purposes best secured—occupied a good deal of time; and yet these engaging pursuits were secondary in real emotion to his frequent conversations with Miss Arundel, in whose society every day he took a strange and deeper interest.

She did not extend to him that ready sympathy which was supplied by the two priests. On the contrary, when he was apt to indulge in those speculations which they always encouraged, and rewarded by adroit applause, she was often silent, throwing on him only the scrutiny of those violet eyes, whose glance was rather fascinating than apt to captivate. And yet he was irresistibly drawn to her, and, once recalling the portrait in the gallery, he ventured to murmur that they were kinsfolk.

“Oh! I have no kin, no country,” said
Miss Arundel. "These are not times for kin and country. I have given up all these things for my Master!"

"But are our times so trying as that?" inquired Lothair.

"They are times for new crusades," said Miss Arundel, with energy, "though it may be of a different character from the old. If I were a man, I would draw my sword for Christ. There are as great deeds to be done as the siege of Ascalon, or even as the freeing of the Holy Sepulchre."

In the midst of a profound discussion with Father Coleman on Mariolatry, Lothair, rapt in reverie, suddenly introduced the subject of Miss Arundel. "I wonder what will be her lot?" he exclaimed.

"It seems to me to be settled," said Father Coleman. "She will be the bride of the Church."

"Indeed!" and he started, and even changed color.

"She deems it her vocation," said Father Coleman.

"And yet, with such gifts, to be immersed in a convent," said Lothair.

"That would not necessarily follow," replied Father Coleman. "Miss Arundel may occupy a position in which she may exercise much influence for the great cause which absorbs her being."

"There is a divine energy about her," said Lothair, almost speaking to himself. "It could not have been given for little ends."

"If Miss Arundel could meet with a spirit as exalted and as energetic as her own," said Father Coleman, "her fate might be different. She has no thoughts which are not great, and no purposes which are not sublime. But for the companion of her life she would require no less than a Godfrey de Bouillon."

Lothair began to find the time pass very rapidly at Vaux. Easter week had nearly vanished; Vaux had been gay during the last few days. Every day some visitors came down from London; sometimes they returned in the evening; sometimes they passed the night at Vaux, and returned to town in the morning with large bouquets. Lothair felt it was time for him to interfere, and he broke his intention to Lady St. Jerome; but Lady St. Jerome would not hear of it. So he muttered something about business.

"Exactly," she said; "everybody has business, and I dare say you have a great deal. But Vaux is exactly the place for persons who have business. You go up to town by an early train, and then you return exactly in time for dinner, and bring us all the news from the clubs."

Lothair was beginning to say something, but Lady St. Jerome, who, when necessary, had the rare art of not listening without offending the speaker, told him that they did not intend themselves to return to town for a week or so, and that she knew Lord St. Jerome would be greatly annoyed if Lothair did not remain.

Lothair remained; and he went up to town one or two mornings to transact business; that is to say, to see a celebrated architect, and to order plans for a cathedral, in which all the purposes of those sublime and exquisite structures were to be realized. The drawings would take a considerable time to prepare, and these must be deeply considered. So Lothair became quite domiciliated at Vaux: he went up to town in the morning, and returned, as it were, to his home; everybody delighted to welcome him, and yet he seemed not expected. His rooms were called after his name; and the household treated him as one of the family.

CHAPTER XVII.

A few days before Lothair's visit was to terminate, the cardinal and Monsignore Berwick arrived at Vaux. His eminence was received with much ceremony; the marshalled household, ranged in lines, fell on their knees at his approach, and Lady St. Jerome, Miss Arundel, and some other ladies, scarcely less choice and fair, with the lowest obeisance, touched, with their honored lips, his princely hand.

The monsignore had made another visit to Paris on his intended return to Rome,
but, in consequence of some secret intelligence which he had acquired in the French capital, had thought fit to return to England to consult with the cardinal. There seemed to be no doubt that the revolutionary party in Italy, assured by the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome, were again stirring. There seemed also little doubt that London was the centre of preparation, though the project and the projectors were involved in much mystery. "They want money," said the monsignore; "that we know, and that is now our best chance. The Aspromonte expedition drained their private resources; and as for further aid, that is out of the question; the galantuomo is bankrupt. But the atheists are desperate, and we must prepare for events."

On the morning after their arrival, the cardinal invited Lothair to a stroll in the park. "There is the feeling of spring this morning," said his eminence, "though scarcely yet its vision." It was truly a day of balm, and sweetness, and quickening life; a delicate mist hung about the immense trees and the masses of more distant woods, and seemed to clothe them with that fulness of foliage which was not yet theirs. The cardinal discoursed much on forestrees, and happily. He recommended Lothair to read Evelyn's "Sylva." Mr. Evelyn had a most accomplished mind; indeed, a character in every respect that approached perfection. He was also a most religious man.

"I wonder," said Lothair, "how any man who is religious can think of any thing but religion."

"True," said the cardinal, and looking at him earnestly, "most true. But all things that are good and beautiful make us more religious. They tend to the development of the religious principle in us, which is our divine nature. And, my dear young friend," and here his eminence put his arm easily and affectionately into that of Lothair, "it is a most happy thing for you, that you live so much with a really religious family. It is a great boon for a young man, and a rare one."

"I feel it so," said Lothair, his face kindling.

"Ah!" said the cardinal, "when we remember that this country once consisted only of such families!" And then, with a sigh, and as if speaking to himself, "And they made it so great and so beautiful!"

"It is still great and beautiful," said Lothair, but rather in a tone of inquiry than decision.

"But the cause of its greatness and its beauty no longer exists. It became great and beautiful because it believed in God."

"But faith is not extinct?" said Lothair. "It exists in the Church," replied the cardinal, with decision. "All without that pale is practical atheism."

"It seems to me that a sense of duty is natural to man," said Lothair, "and that there can be no satisfaction in life without attempting to fulfil it."

"Noble words, my dear young friend; noble and true. And the highest duty of man, especially in this age, is to vindicate the principles of religion, without which the world must soon become a scene of universal desolation."

"I wonder if England will ever again be a religious country?" said Lothair, musingly.

"I pray for that daily," said the cardinal; and he invited his companion to seat himself on the trunk of an oak that had been lying there since the autumn fall. A slight hectic flame played over the pale and attenuated countenance of the cardinal; he seemed for a moment in deep thought; and then, in a voice distinct yet somewhat hushed, and at first rather faltering, he said: "I know not a grander, or a nobler career, for a young man of talents and position in this age, than to be the champion and asserter of Divine truth. It is not probable that there could be another conqueror in our time. The world is wearied of statesmen whom democracy has degraded into politicians, and of orators who have become what they call debaters. I do not believe there could be another Dante, even another Milton. The world is devoted to physical science, because it believes these discoveries will increase its capacity of luxury and self-indulgence. But the pursuit of science leads only to the insoluble. When we arrive at
that barren term, the Divine voice summons
man, as it summoned Samuel; all the poetry
and passion and sentiment of human nature
are taking refuge in religion; and he, whose
deeds and words most nobly represent Di-
vine thoughts, will be the man of this cen-
tury."

"But who could be equal to such a task?"
murmured Lothair.

"Yourself," exclaimed the cardinal, and
he threw his glittering eye upon his com-
panion. "Any one with the necessary gifts,
who had implicit faith in the Divine pur-
pose."

"But the Church is perplexed; it is am-
biguous, contradictory."

"No, no," said the cardinal; "not the
Church of Christ; it is never perplexed,
never ambiguous, never contradictory. Why
should it be? How could it be? The Di-
vine persons are ever with it, strengthening
and guiding it with perpetual miracles.
Perplexed churches are churches made by
Act of Parliament, not by God."

Lothair seemed to start, and looked at
his guardian with a scrutinizing glance.
And then he said, but not without hesita-
tion, "I experience at times great despond-
ency."

"Naturally," replied the cardinal. "Ev-
ery man must be despondent who is not a
Christian."

"But I am a Christian," said Lothair.

"A Christian estranged," said the car-
dinal; "a Christian without the consolations
of Christianity."

"There is something in that," said Lo-
thair. "I require the consolations of Chris-
tianity, and yet I feel I have them not.
Why is this?"

"Because what you call your religion is
a thing apart from your life, and it ought to
be your life. Religion should be the rule
of life, not a casual incident of it. There is
not a duty of existence, not a joy or sorrow
which the services of the Church do not
assert, or with which they do not sympa-
thize. Tell me, now; you have, I was glad
to hear, attended the services of the Church
of late, since you have been under this ad-
mirable roof. Have you not then found
some consolation?"

"Yes; without doubt I have been often
solaced." And Lothair sighed.

"What the soul is to man, the Church is
to the world," said the cardinal. "It is the
link between us and the Divine nature. It
came from heaven complete; it has never
changed, and it can never alter. Its cere-
monies are types of celestial truths; its
services are suited to all the moods of man;
they strengthen him in his wisdom and his
purity, and control and save him in the
hour of passion and temptation. Taken as
a whole, with all its ministrations, its orders,
its offices, and the divine splendor of its rit-
ual, it secures us on earth some adumbration
of that ineffable glory which awaits the
faithful in heaven, where the blessed Mother
of God and ten thousand saints perpetually
guard over us with Divine intercession."

"I was not taught these things in my
boyhood," said Lothair.

"And you might reproach me, and rea-
sonably, as your guardian, for my neglect," said the cardinal. "But my power was very
limited, and, when my duties commenced,
you must remember that I was myself
estranged from the Church, I was myself a
Parliamentary Christian, till despondency
and study and ceaseless thought and prayer,
and the Divine will, brought me to light and
rest. But I at least saved you from a Pres-
byterian university; I at least secured Ox-
ford for you; and I can assure you, of my
many struggles, that was not the least."

"It gave the turn to my mind," said
Lothair, "and I am grateful to you for it.
What it will all end in, God only knows."

"It will end in His glory and in yours," said the cardinal. "I have spoken, perhaps,
too much and too freely, but you greatly in-
terest me, not merely because you are my
charge, and the son of my beloved friend,
but because I perceive in you great qualities
—qualities so great," continued the cardinal
with earnestness, "that, properly guided,
they may considerably affect the history of
this country, and perhaps even have a wider
range."

Lothair shook his head
"Well, well," continued the cardinal in
a lighter tone, "we will pursue our ramble.
At any rate, I am not wrong in this, that
you have no objection to join in my daily prayer for the conversion of this kingdom to— religious truth,” his eminence added after a pause.

“Yes; religious truth,” said Lothair, “we must all pray for that.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lothair returned to town excited and agitated. He felt that he was on the eve of some great event in his existence, but its precise character was not defined. One conclusion, however, was indubitable: life must be religion; when we consider what is at stake, and that our eternal welfare depends on our due preparation for the future, it was folly to spare a single hour from the consideration of the best means to secure our readiness. Such a subject does not admit of half measures or of halting opinions. It seemed to Lothair that nothing could interest him in life that was not symbolical of divine truths and an adumbration of the celestial hereafter.

Could truth have descended from heaven ever to be distorted, to be corrupted, misapprehended, misunderstood? Impossible! Such a belief would confound and contradict all the attributes of the All-wise and the All-mighty. There must be truth on earth now as fresh and complete as it was at Bethlehem. And how could it be preserved but by the influence of the Paraclete acting on an ordained class? On this head his tutor at Oxford had fortified him; by a conviction of the Apostolical succession of the English bishops, which no Act of Parliament could alter or affect. But Lothair was haunted by a feeling that the relations of his Communion with the Blessed Virgin were not satisfactory. They could not content either his heart or his intellect. Was it becoming that a Christian should live as regards the hallowed Mother of his God in a condition of harsh estrangement? What mediatorial influence more awfully appropriate than the consecrated agent of the mighty mystery? Nor could he, even in his early days, accept without a scruple the frigid system that would class the holy actors in the divine drama of the Redemption as mere units in the categories of vanished generations. Human beings who had been in personal relation with the Godhead must be different from other human beings. There must be some transcendent quality in their lives and careers, in their very organization, which marks them out from all secular heroes. What was Alexander the Great, or even Caius Julius, compared with that apostle whom Jesus loved?

Restless and disquieted, Lothair paced the long and lofty rooms which had been scored for him in a London hotel which rivalled the colossal convenience of Paris and the American cities. Their tawdry ornaments and their terrible new furniture would not do after the galleries and portraits of Vaux. Lothair sighed.

Why did that visit ever end? Why did the world consist of any thing else but Tudor palaces in ferny parks, or time be other than a perpetual Holy Week? He never sighed at Vaux. Why? He supposed it was because their religion was his life, and here—and he looked around him with a shudder. The cardinal was right: it was a most happy thing for him to be living so much with so truly a religious family.

The door opened, and servants came in bearing a large and magnificent portfolio. It was of morocco and of prelatical purple with broad bands of gold and alternate ornaments of a cross and a coronet. A servant handed to Lothair a letter, which enclosed the key that opened its lock. The portfolio contained the plans and drawings of the cathedral.

Lothair was lost in admiration of these designs and their execution. But, after the first fever of investigation was over, he required sympathy and also information. In a truly religious family there would always be a Father Coleman or a Monsignore Catesby to guide and to instruct. But a Protestant, if he wants aid or advice on any matter, can only go to his solicitor. But as he proceeded in his researches he sensibly felt that the business was one above
even an oratorian or a monsignore. It required a finer and a more intimate sympathy; a taste at the same time more inspired and more inspiring; some one who blended with divine convictions the graceful energy of human feeling, and who would not only animate him to effort but fascinate him to its fulfilment. The counsellor he required was Miss Arundel.

Lothair had quitted Vauze one week, and it seemed to him a year. During the first four-and-twenty hours he felt like a child who had returned to school, and, the day after, like a man on a desert island. Various other forms of misery and misfortune were suggested by his succeeding experience. Town brought no distractions to him; he knew very few people, and these he had not yet encountered; he had once ventured to White’s, but found only a group of gray-headed men, who evidently did not know him, and who seemed to scan him with cynical nonchalance. These were not the golden youth whom he had been assured by Bertram would greet him; so, after reading a newspaper for a moment upside downward, he got away. But he had no harbor of refuge, and was obliged to ride down to Richmond and dine alone, and meditate on symbols and celestial adumbrations. Every day he felt how inferior was this existence to that of a life in a truly religious family.

But, of all the members of the family to which his memory recurred with such unflagging interest, none more frequently engaged his thoughts than Miss Arundel. Her conversation, which stimulated his intelligence while it rather piqued his self-love, exercised a great influence over him, and he had omitted no opportunity of enjoying her society. That society and its animating power he sadly missed; and now that he had before him the very drawings about which they had frequently talked, and she was not by his side to suggest and sympathize and criticise and praise, he felt unusually depressed.

Lothair corresponded with Lady St. Jerome, and was aware of her intended movements. But the return of the family to London had been somewhat delayed. When this disappointment was first made known to him, his impulse was to ride down to Vauze; but the tact in which he was not deficient assured him that he ought not to reappear on a stage where he had already figured for perhaps too considerable a time, and so another week had to be passed, softened, however, by visits from the father of the oratory and the chamberlain of his holiness, who came to look after Lothair with much friendliness, and with whom it was consolatory and even delightful for him to converse on sacred art, still holier things, and also Miss Arundel.

At length, though it seemed impossible, this second week elapsed, and to-morrow Lothair was to lunch with Lady St. Jerome in St. James’s Square, and to meet all his friends. He thought of it all day, and he passed a restless night. He took an early canter to rally his energies, and his fancy was active in the splendor of the spring. The chestnuts were in silver bloom, and the pink May had flushed the thorns, and banks of sloping turf were radiant with plots of gorgeous flowers. The waters glittered in the sun, and the air was fragrant with that spell which, only can be found in metropolitans mignonette. It was the hour and the season when heroic youth comes to great decisions, achieves exploits, or perpetrates scrapes.

Nothing could be more cordial, nothing more winning, than the reception of Lothair by Lady St. Jerome. She did not conceal her joy at their being again together. Even Miss Arundel, though still calm, even a little demure, seemed glad to see him: her eyes looked kind and pleased, and she gave him her hand with graceful heartiness. It was the sacred hour of two when Lothair arrived, and they were summoned to lunch-noon almost immediately. Then they were not alone; Lord St. Jerome was not there, but the priests were present and some others. Lothair, however, sat next to Miss Arundel.

"I have been thinking of you very often since I left Vauze," said Lothair to his neighbor.

"Charitably, I am sure."

"I have been thinking of you ever
day," he continued, "for I wanted your advice."

"Ah! but that is not a popular thing to give."

"But it is precious—at least, yours is to me—and I want it now very much."

"Father Coleman told me you had got the plans for the cathedral," said Miss Arundel.

"And I want to show them to you."

"I fear I am only a critic," said Miss Arundel, "and I do not admire mere critics. I was very free in my comments to you on several subjects at Vauxe; and I must now say I thought you bore it very kindly."

"I was enchanted," said Lothair, "and desire nothing but to be ever subject to such remarks. But this affair of the cathedral, it is your own thought—I would fain hope your own wish, for unless it were your own wish I do not think I ever should be able to accomplish it."

"And when the cathedral is built," said Miss Arundel, "what then?"

"Do you not remember telling me at Vauxe that all sacred buildings should be respected, for that in the long-run they generally fell to the professors of the true faith?"

"But when they built St. Peter's, they dedicated it to a saint in heaven," said Miss Arundel. "To whom is yours to be inscribed?"

"To a saint in heaven and in earth;" said Lothair, blushing; "to St. Clare."

But Lady St. Jerome and her guests rose at this moment, and it is impossible to say with precision whether this last remark of Lothair absolutely reached the ear of Miss Arundel. She looked as if it had not. The priests and the other guests dispersed. Lothair accompanied the ladies to the drawing-room; he lingered, and he was meditating if the occasion served to say more.

Lady St. Jerome was writing a note, Miss Arundel was arranging some work, Lothair was affecting an interest in her employment in order that he might be seated by her and ask her questions, when the groom of the chambers entered and inquired whether her ladyship was at home, and being answered in the affirmative, retired, and announced and ushered in the duchess and Lady Corisande.

CHAPTER XIX.

It seemed that the duchess and Lady St. Jerome were intimate, for they called each other by their Christian names, and kissed each other. The young ladies also were cordial. Her grace greeted Lothair with heartiness; Lady Corisande with some reserve. Lothair thought she looked very radiant and very proud.

It was some time since they had all met—not since the end of the last season—so there was a great deal to talk about. There had been deaths and births and marriages, which required a flying comment—all important events; deaths which solved many difficulties, heirs to estates which were not expected, and weddings which surprised everybody.

"And have you seen Selina?" inquired Lady St. Jerome.

"Not yet; except mamma, this is our first visit," replied the duchess.

"Ah! that is real friendship! She came down to Vauxe the other day, but I did not think she was looking well. She frets herself too much about her boys; she does not know what to do with them. They will not go into the Church, and they have no fortune for the Guards."

"I understood that Lord Plantagenet was to be a civil engineer," said Lady Corisande.

"And Lord Albert Victor to have a sheep-walk in Australia," continued Lady St. Jerome.

"They say that a lord must not go to the bar," said Miss Arundel. "It seems to me very unjust."

"Alfred Beaufort went the circuit," said Lady Corisande, "but I believe they drove him into Parliament."

"You will miss your friend Bertram at Oxford," said the duchess, addressing Lothair.

"Indeed," said Lothair, rather confused;
for he was himself a defaulter in collegiate attendance. "I was just going to write to him to see whether one could not keep half a term."

"Oh! nothing will prevent his taking his degree," said the duchess, "but I fear there must be some delay. There is a vacancy for our county—Mr. Sandstone is dead, and they insist upon returning Bertram. I hope he will be of age before the nomination. The duke is much opposed to it; he wishes him to wait; but in these days it is not so easy for young men to get into Parliament. It is not as it used to be; we cannot choose."

"This is an important event," said Lothair to Lady Corisande.

"I think it is; nor do I believe Bertram is too young for public life. These are not times to be laggard."

"There is no doubt they are very serious times," said Lothair.

"I have every confidence in Bertram—in his ability and his principles."

The ladies began to talk about the approaching drawing-room and Lady Corisande's presentation, and Lothair thought it right to make his obeisance and withdraw. He met in the hall Father Coleman, who was in fact looking after him, and would have induced him to repair to the father's room and hold some interesting conversation, but Lothair was not so congenial as usual. He was even abrupt, and the father, who never pressed any thing, assuming that Lothair had some engagement, relinquished with a serene brow, but not without chagrin, what he had deemed might have proved a golden opportunity.

And yet Lothair had no engagement, and did not know where to go or what to do with himself. But he wanted to be alone, and of all persons in the world at that moment, he had a sort of instinct that the one he wished least to converse with was Father Coleman.

"She has every confidence in his principles," said Lothair to himself as he mounted his horse, "and his principles were mine six months ago, when I was at Brentham. Delicious Brentham! It seems like a dream; but every thing seems like a dream; I hardly know whether life is agony or bliss."

CHAPTER XX.

The duke was one of the few gentlemen in London who lived in a palace. One of the half-dozen of those stately structures that our capital boasts had fallen to his lot. An heir-apparent to the throne, in the earlier days of the present dynasty, had resolved to be lodged as became a prince, and had raised, amid gardens which he had diverted from one of the royal parks, an edifice not unworthy of Vicenza in its best days, though on a far more extensive scale than any pile that favored city boasts. Before the palace was finished, the prince died, and irretrievably in debt. His executors were glad to sell to the trustees of the ancestors of the chief of the house of Brentham the incomplete palace, which ought never to have been commenced. The ancestor of the duke was by no means so strong a man as the duke himself, and prudent people rather murmured at the exploit. But it was what is called a lucky family—that is to say, a family with a charm that always attracted and absorbed heiresses; and perhaps the splendor of Crecey House—for it always retained its original title—might have in some degree contributed to fascinate the taste or imagination of the beautiful women who, generation after generation, brought their bright castles and their broad manors to swell the state and rent-rolls of the family who were so kind to Lothair.

The centre of Crecey House consisted of a hall of vast proportion, and reaching to the roof. Its walls commemorated, in paintings by the most celebrated artists of the age, the exploits of the Black Prince; and its coved ceiling, in panels resplendent with Venetian gold, contained the forms and portraits of English heroes. A corridor round this hall contained the most celebrated private collection of pictures in England and opened into a series of sumptuous saloons.

It was a rather early hour when Lothair,
the morning after his meeting the duchess at Lady St. Jerome's, called at Crecy House; but it was only to leave his card. He would not delay for a moment paying his respects there, and yet he shrank from thrusting himself immediately into the circle. The duke's brougham was in the court-yard. Lothair was holding his groom's horse, who had dismounted, when the hall-door opened, and his grace and Bertram came forth.

"Halloa, old fellow!" exclaimed Bertram, "only think of your being here. It seems an age since we met. The duchess was telling us about you at breakfast."

"Go in and see them," said the duke, "there is a large party at luncheon; Augusta Montairys is there. Bertram and I are obliged to go to Lincoln's Inn, something about his election."

But Lothair murmured thanks and declined.

"What are you going to do with yourself to-day?" said the duke. "And Lothair hesitating, his grace continued: "Well, then, come and dine with us."

"Of course you will come, old fellow. I have not seen you since you left Oxford at the beginning of the year. And then we can settle about your term." And Lothair assenting, they drove away.

It was nine o'clock before they dined. The days were getting very long, and soft, and sweet; the riding-parties lingered amid the pink May and the tender twilight-breeze. The Montairys dined to-day at Crecy House, and a charming married daughter without her husband, and Lord and Lady Clannmore, who were near kin to the duchess, and themselves so good-looking and agreeable that they were as good at a dinner-party as a couple of first-rate entrées. There was also Lord Carisbrooke, a young man of distinguished air and appearance; his own master, with a large estate, and three years or so older than Lothair.

They dined in the Chinese saloon, which was of moderate dimensions, but bright with fantastic forms and colors, brilliantly lit up. It was the privilege of Lothair to hand the duchess to her seat. He observed that Lord Carisbrooke was placed next to Lady Corisande, though he had not taken her out.

"This dinner reminds me of my visit to Brentham," said Lothair.

"Almost the same party," said the duchess.

"The visit to Brentham was the happiest time of my life," said Lothair, moodily.

"But you have seen a great deal since," said the duchess.

"I am not so sure it is of any use seeing things," said Lothair.

When the ladies retired, there was some talk about horses. Lord Carisbrooke was breeding; Lothair thought it was a duty to breed, but not to go on the turf. Lord Carisbrooke thought there could be no good breeding without racing; Lothair was of opinion that races might be confined to one's own parks, with no legs admitted, and immense prizes, which must cause emulation. Then they joined the ladies, and then, in a short time, there was music. Lothair hovered about Lady Corisande, and at last seized a happy opportunity of addressing her.

"I shall never forget your singing at Brentham," he said; "at first I thought it might be as Lady Montairy said, because I was not used to fine singing; but I heard the Venusina the other day, and I prefer your voice and style."

"Have you heard the Venusina?" said Lady Corisande, with animation; "I know nothing that I look forward to with more interest. But I was told she was not to open her mouth until she appeared at the opera. Where did you hear her?"

"Oh, I heard her," said Lothair, "at the Roman Catholic cathedral."

"I am sure I shall never hear her there," said Lady Corisande, looking very grave.

"Do not you think music a powerful accessory to religion?" said Lothair, but a little embarrassed.

"Within certain limits," said Lady Corisande—"the limits I am used to; but I should prefer to hear opera-singers at the opera."

"Ah! if all amateurs could sing like you," said Lothair, "that would be unnecessary. But a fine mass by Mozart—it requires great skill as well as power to render it. I admire no one so much as Mozart, and
especially his masses. I have been hearing a great many of them lately."

"So we understood," said Lady Corisande, rather dryly, and looking about her as if she were not much interested, or at any rate not much gratified by the conversation.

Lothair felt he was not getting on, and he wished to get on, but he was socially inexperienced, and his resources not much in hand. There was a pause—it seemed to him an awkward pause; and then Lady Corisande walked away and addressed Lady Clannmore.

Some very fine singing began at this moment; the room was hushed, no one moved, and Lothair, undisturbed, had the opportunity of watching his late companion. There was something in Lady Corisande that to him was irresistibly captivating; and as he was always thinking and analyzing, he employed himself in discovering the cause. "She is not particularly gracious," he said to himself, "at least not to me; she is beautiful, but so are others; and others, like her, are clever—perhaps more clever. But there is something in her brow, her glance, her carriage, which intimate what they call character, which interests me. Six months ago I was in love with her, because I thought she was like her sisters. I love her sisters, but she is not the least like them."

The music ceased; Lothair moved away, and he approached the duke.

"I have a favor to ask your grace," he said. "I have made up my mind that I shall not go back to Oxford this term; would your grace do me the great favor of presenting me at the next levéé?"

CHAPTER XXI.

One's life changes in a moment. Half a month ago, Lothair, without an acquaintance, was meditating his return to Oxford. Now he seemed to know everybody who was anybody. His table was overflowing with invitations to all the fine houses in town. First came the routs and the balls; then, when he had been presented to the husbands, came the dinners. His kind friends the duchess and Lady St. Jerome were the fairies which had worked this sudden scene of enchantment. A single word from them, and London was at Lothair's feet.

He liked it amazingly. He quite forgot the conclusion at which he had arrived respecting society a year ago, drawn from his vast experience of the single party which he had then attended. Feelings are different when you know a great many persons, and every person is trying to please you; above all, when there are individuals whom you want to meet, and whom, if you do not meet, you become restless.

Town was beginning to blaze. Broughams whirled and bright barouches glanced, troops of social cavalry cantered and canacolled in morning rides, and the bells of prancing ponies, lashed by delicate hands, jingled in the laughing air. There were stoppages in Bond Street, which seems to cap the climax of civilization, after crowded clubs and swarming parks.

But the great event of the season was the presentation of Lady Corisande. Truly our bright maiden of Brentham woke and found herself famous. There are families whom everybody praises, and families who are treated in a different way. Either will do; all the sons and daughters of the first succeed; all the sons and daughters of the last are encouraged in perverseness by the prophetic determination of society. Half a dozen married sisters, who were the delight and ornament of their circles, in the case of Lady Corisande were good precursors of popularity; but the world would not be content with that; they credited her with all their charms and winning qualities, but also with something grander and supreme; and from the moment her fair cheek was sealed by the gracious approbation of majesty, all the critics of the court at once recognized her as the cynosure of the empyrean.

Monsignore Catesby, who looked after Lothair, and was always breakfasting with him without the necessity of an invitation—a fascinating man, and who talked upon
all subjects except high mass—knew every thing that took place at court without being present there himself. He led the conversation to the majestic theme, and while he seemed to be busied in breaking an egg with delicate precision, and hardly listening to the frank expression of opinions which he carelessly encouraged, obtained a not insufficient share of Lothair’s views and impressions of human beings and affairs in general during the last few days, which had witnessed a levée and a drawing-room.

“Ah! then, you were so fortunate as to know the beauty before her débüt,” said the monsignore.

“Intimately; her brother is my friend. I was at Brentham last summer. Delicious place! and the most agreeable visit I ever made in my life—at least, one of the most agreeable.”

“Ah, ah!” said the monsignore. “Let me ring for some toast.”

On the night of the drawing-room a great ball was given at Crecy House, to celebrate the entrance of Corisande into the world. It was a sumptuous festival. The palace, resonant with fantastic music, blazed amid illuminated gardens rich with summer warmth.

A prince of the blood was dancing with Lady Corisande. Lothair was there, vis-à-vis with Miss Arundel.

“I delight in this hall,” she said to Lothair; “but how superior the pictured scene to the reality!”

“What! would you like, then, to be in a battle?”

“I should like to be with heroes, wherever they might be. What a fine character was the Black Prince! And they call those days the days of superstition!”

The silver horns sounded a brave flourish. Lothair had to advance and meet Lady Corisande. Her approaching mien was full of grace and majesty, but Lothair thought there was a kind expression in her glance, which seemed to remember Brentham, and, that he was her brother’s friend.

A little later in the evening he was her partner. He could not refrain from congratulating her on the beauty and the success of the festival.

“I am glad you are pleased, and I am glad you think it successful; but, you know, I am no judge, for this is my first ball!”

“Oh! to be sure; and yet it seems impossible,” he continued, in a tone of murmuring admiration.

“Oh! I have been at little dances at my sisters’—half behind the door,” she added, with a slight smile. “But to-night I am present at a scene of which I have only read.”

“And how do you like balls?” said Lothair.

“I think I shall like them very much,” said Lady Corisande; “but to-night, I will confess, I am a little nervous.”

“You do not look so.”

“I am glad of that.”

“Why?”

“Is it not a sign of weakness?”

“Can feeling be weakness?”

“Feeling without sufficient cause is, I should think.” And then, and in a tone of some archness, she said, “And how do you like balls?”

“Well, I like them amazingly,” said Lothair. “They seem to me to have every quality which can render an entertainment agreeable: music, light, flowers, beautiful faces, graceful forms, and occasionally charming conversation.”

“Yes; and that never lingers,” said Lady Corisande, “for see, I am wanted.”

When they were again undisturbed, Lothair regretted the absence of Bertram, who was kept at the House.

“It is a great disappointment,” said Lady Corisande; but he will yet arrive, though late. I should be most unhappy though, if he were absent from his post on such an occasion. I am sure if he were here, I could not dance.”

“You are a most ardent politician,” said Lothair.

“Oh! I do not care in the least about common politics—parties, and office, and all that; I neither regard nor understand them,” replied Lady Corisande. “But when wicked men try to destroy the country, then I like my family to be in the front.”

As the destruction of the country meditated this night by wicked men was
some change in the status of the Church of England, which Monsignor Catesby in the morning had suggested to Lothair as both just and expedient and highly conciliatory, Lothair did not pursue the theme, for he had a greater degree of tact than usually falls to the lot of the ingenuous.

The bright moments flew on. Suddenly there was a mysterious silence in the hall, followed by a kind of suppressed stir. Every one seemed to be speaking with bated breath, or, if moving, walking on tip-toe. It was the supper-hour—

"Soft hour which wakes the wish and melts the heart."

Royalty, followed by the imperial presence of ambassadors, and escorted by a group of dazzling duchesses and paladins of high degree, was ushered with courteous pomp by the host and hostess into a choice saloon, hung with rose-colored tapestry and illumined by chandeliers of crystal, where they were served from gold plate. But the thousand less favored were not badly off, when they found themselves in the more capacious chambers, into which they rushed with an eagerness hardly in keeping with the splendid nonchalance of the preceding hours.

"What a perfect family!" exclaimed Hugo Bohun, as he extracted a couple of fat little birds from their bed of aspic jelly.

"Every thing they do in such perfect taste. How safe you were here to have ortolans for supper!"

All the little round tables, though their number was infinite, were full. Male groups hung about; some in attendance on fair dames, some foraging for themselves, some thoughtful and more patient, and awaiting a satisfactory future. Never was such an elegant daller.

"I wonder where Carisbrooke is?" said Hugo Bohun. "They say he is wonderfully taken with the beauteous daughter of the house."

"I will back the Duke of Brecon against him," said one of his companions. "He raved about her at White's yesterday."

"Hem!"

"The end is not so near as all that," said a third wassailer.

"I do not know that," said Hugo Bohun. "It is a family that marries off quickly. If a fellow is obliged to marry, he always likes to marry one of them."

"What of this new star?" said his friend, and he mentioned Lothair.

"Oh! he is too young—not launched. Besides, he is going to turn Catholic, and I doubt whether that would do in that quarter."

"But he has a greater fortune than any of them."

"Immense! A man I know, who knows another man—" and then he began a long statistical story about Lothair's resources.

"Have you got any room here, Hugo?" drawled out Lord St. Aldegonde.

"Plenty, and here is my chair."

"On no account; half of it and some soup will satisfy me."

"I should have thought you would have been with the swells," said Hugo Bohun.

"That does not exactly suit me," said St. Aldegonde. "I was ticketed to the Duchess of Salop, but I got a first-rate substitute with the charm of novelty for her grace, and sent her in with Lothair."

St. Aldegonde was the heir-apparent of the wealthiest, if not the most ancient, dukedom in the United Kingdom. He was spoiled, but he knew it. Had he been an ordinary being, he would have merely subsided into selfishness and caprice; but, having good abilities and a good disposition, he was eccentric, adventurous, and sentimental. Notwithstanding the apathy which had been engendered by premature experience, St. Aldegonde held extreme opinions, especially on political affairs, being a republican of the reddest dye. He was opposed to all privilege, and indeed to all orders of men, except dukes, who were a necessity. He was also strongly in favor of the equal division of all property, except land. Liberty depended on land, and the greater the land-owners, the greater the liberty of a country. He would hold forth on this topic even with energy, amazed at any one differing from him; "As if a fellow could have too much land," he would urge, with a voice and glance which defied contradiction. St. Aldegonde had married for love, and ho
loved his wife, but he was strongly in favor of woman's rights and their extremest consequences. It was thought that he had originally adopted these latter views with the amiable intention of piquing Lady St. Aldegonde; but if so, he had not succeeded. Beaming with brightness, with the voice and airiness of a bird, and a cloudless temper, Albertha St. Aldegonde had, from the first hour of her marriage, concentrated her intelligence, which was not mean, on one object; and that was, never to cross her husband on any conceivable topic. They had been married several years, and she treated him as a darling spoiled child. When he cried for the moon, it was promised him immediately; however irrational his proposition, she always assented to it, though generally by tact and vigilance she guided him in the right direction. Nevertheless, St. Aldegonde was sometimes in scrapes; but then he always went and told his best friend, whose greatest delight was to extricate him from his perplexities and embarrassments.

CHAPTER XXII.

Although Lothair was not in the slightest degree shaken in his conviction that life should be entirely religious, he was perplexed by the inevitable obstacles which seemed perpetually to oppose themselves to the practice of his opinions. It was not merely pleasure in its multiform appearances that he had to contend against, but business began imperiously to solicit his attention. Every month brought him nearer to his majority, and the frequent letters from Mr. Putney Giles now began to assume the pressing shape of solicitations for personal interviews. He had a long conversation one morning with Father Coleman on this subject, who greatly relieved him by the assurance that a perfectly religious life was one of which the sovereign purpose was to uphold the interests of the Church—of Christ, the father added after a momentary pause. Business, and even amusement, were not only compatible with such a purpose, but might even be conducive to its fulfilment.

Mr. Putney Giles reminded Lothair that the attainment of his majority must be celebrated, and in a becoming manner. Preparation, and even considerable preparation, was necessary. There were several scenes of action—some very distant. It was not too early to contemplate arrangements. Lothair really must confer with his guardians. They were both now in town, the Scotch uncle having come up to attend Parliament. Could they be brought together? Was it indeed impossible? If so, who was to give the necessary instructions?

It was much more than a year since Lothair had met his uncle, and he did not anticipate much satisfaction from the renewal of their intimacy; but every feeling of propriety demanded that it should be recognized, and to a certain degree revived. Lord Culloden was a black Scotchman, tall and lean, with good features, a hard red face and iron-gray hair. He was a man who shrank from scenes, and he greeted Lothair as if they had only parted yesterday. Looking at him with his keen, unsentimental, but not unkind, eye, he said: "Well, sir, I thought you would have been at Oxford."

"Yes, my dear uncle; but circumstances—"

"Well, well, I don't want to hear the cause. I am very glad you are not here; I believe you might as well be at Rome."

And then in due course, and after some talk of the past and old times, Lothair referred to the suggestions of Mr. Giles, and hinted at a meeting of his guardians to confer and advise together.

"No, no," said the Scotch peer, shaking his head; "I will have nothing to do with the Scarlet Lady. Mr. Giles is an able and worthy man; he may well be trusted to draw up a programme for our consideration, and indeed it is an affair in which yourself should be most consulted. Let all be done liberally, for you have a great inheritance, and I would be no mudgeon in these matters."
"Well, my dear uncle, whatever is arranged, I hope you and my cousins will honor and gratify me with your presence throughout the proceedings."

"Well, well, it is not much in my way. You will be having balls and fine ladies. There is no fool like an old fool, they say; but I think, from what I hear, the young fools will beat us in the present day. Only think of young persons going over to the Church of Rome. Why, they are just naturals!"

The organizing genius of Mr. Putney Giles had rarely encountered a more fitting theme than the celebration of the impending majority. There was place for all his energy and talent and resources; a great central inauguration; sympathetic festivals and gatherings in half a dozen other counties; the truth, as it were, of a sister kingdom to be pledged; a vista of balls and banquets, and illuminations and addresses, of ceaseless sports and speeches, and processions alike endless.

"What I wish to effect," said Mr. Giles, as he was giving his multifarious orders, "is to produce among all classes an impression adequate to the occasion. I wish the lord and the tenantry alike to feel they have a duty to perform."

In the mean time, Monsignore Catesby was pressing Lothair to become one of the patrons of a Roman Catholic Bazaar, where Lady St. Jerome and Miss Arundel were to preside over a stall. It was of importance to show that charity was not the privilege of any particular creed.

Between his lawyers, and his monsignores, and his architects, Lothair began to get a little harassed. He was disturbed in his own mind, too, on greater matters, and seemed to feel every day that it was more necessary to take a decided step, and more impossible to decide upon what it should be. He frequently saw the cardinal, who was very kind to him, but who had become more reserved on religious subjects. He had dined more than once with his eminence, and had met some distinguished prelates and some of his fellow-nobles who had been weaned from the errors of their cradle. The cardinal, perhaps, thought that the presence of these eminent converts would facilitate the progress, perhaps the decision, of his ward; but something seemed always to happen to divert Lothair in his course. It might be sometimes apparently a very slight cause, but yet for the time sufficient; a phrase of Lady Corisande for example, who, though she never directly addressed him on the subject, was nevertheless deeply interested in his spiritual condition.

"You ought to speak to him, Bertram," she said one day to her brother very indignantly, as she read a fresh paragraph alluding to an impending conversion. "You are his friend. What is the use of friendship, if not in such a crisis as this?"

"I see no use in speaking to a man about love or religion," said Bertram; "they are both stronger than friendship. If there be any foundation for the paragraph, my interference would be of no avail; if there be none, I should only make myself ridiculous."

Nevertheless, Bertram looked a little more after his friend, and disturbing the monsignore, who was at breakfast with Lothair one morning, Bertram obstinately outstayed the priest, and then said: "I tell you what, old fellow, you are rather hip-pish; I wish you were in the House of Commons."

"So do I," said Lothair, with a sigh; "but I have come into every thing ready-made. I begin to think it very unfortunate."

"What are you going to do with yourself to-day? If you be disengaged, I vote we dine together at White's, and then we will go down to the House. I will take you to the smoking-room and introduce you to Bright, and we will trot him out on primo-geniture."

At this moment the servant brought Lothair two letters: one was an epistle from Father Coleman, meeting Lothair's objections to becoming a patron of the Roman Catholic Bazaar, in a very unctuous and exhaustive manner; and the other from his stud-groom at Oxford, detailing some of those disagreeable things which will happen with absent masters who will not answer letters. Lothair loved his stable, and felt particularly anxious to avoid the threatened
A SAD ACCIDENT, BUT GREAT ESCAPE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Lothair's stables were about three miles from Oxford. They were a rather considerable establishment, in which he had taken much interest, and, having always intended to return to Oxford in the early part of the year, although he had occasionally sent for a hack or two to London, his stud had been generally maintained.

The morning after his arrival, he rode over to the stables, where he had ordered his drag to be ready. About a quarter of a mile before he reached his place of destination, he observed at some little distance a crowd in the road, and, hastening on, perceived as he drew nearer a number of men clustered round a dismantled vehicle, and vainly endeavoring to extricate and raise a fallen horse; its companion, panting and foaming, with broken harness but apparently uninjured, standing aside and held by a boy. Somewhat apart stood a lady alone. Lothair immediately dismounted and approached her, saying, "I fear you are in trouble, madam. Perhaps I may be of service?"

The lady was rather tall, and of a singularly distinguished presence. Her air and her costume alike intimated high breeding and fashion. She seemed quite serene amid the tumult and confusion, and apparently the recent danger. As Lothair spoke, she turned her head to him, which had been at first a little averted, and he beheld a striking countenance, but one which he instantly felt he did not see for the first time.

She bowed with dignity to Lothair, and said in a low but distinct voice: "You are most courteous, sir. We have had a sad accident, but a great escape. Our horses ran away with us, and, had it not been for that heap of stones, I do not see how we could have been saved."

"Fortunately my stables are at hand," said Lothair, "and I have a carriage waiting for me at this moment, not a quarter of a mile away. It is at your service, and I will send for it," and his groom, to whom he gave directions, galloped off.

There was a shout as the fallen horse was on his legs again, much cut, and the carriage shattered and useless. A gentleman came from the crowd and approached the lady. He was tall and fair, and not ill-favored, with fine dark eyes and high cheek-bones, and still young, though an enormous beard at the first glance gave him an impression of years, the burden of which he really did not bear. His dress, though not vulgar, was richer and more showy than is usual in this country, and altogether there was something in his manner which, though calm and full of self-respect, was different from the conventional refinement of England. Yet he was apparently an Englishman, as he said to the lady, "It is a bad business, but we must be thankful it is no worse. What troubles me is how you are to get back. It will be a terrible walk over these stony roads, and I can hear of no conveyance."

"My husband," said the lady, as with dignity she presented the person to Lothair. "This gentleman," she continued, "has most kindly offered us the use of his carriage, which is almost at hand."

"Sir, you are a friend," said the gentleman. "I thought there were no horses that I could not master, but it seems I am mistaken. I bought these only yesterday; took a fancy to them as we were driving about, and bought them of a dealer in the road."

"That seems a clever animal," said Lothair, pointing to the one uninjured.

"Ah! you like horses?" said the gentleman.

"Well, I have some taste that way."

"We are visitors to Oxford," said the lady. "Colonel Campian, like all Americans, is very interested in the ancient parts of England."

"To-day we were going to Blenheim,"

visit of Father Coleman on the morrow. His decision was rapid. "I must go down this afternoon to Oxford, my dear fellow. My stable is in confusion. I shall positively return to-morrow, and I will dine with you at White's, and we will go to the House of Commons together, or go to the play."
said the colonel, "but I thought I would try these new bits a bit on a by-road first."

"All's well that ends well," said Lothair; "and there is no reason why you should not fulfil your intention of going to Blenheim, for here is my carriage, and it is entirely at your service for the whole day, and, indeed, as long as you stay at Oxford."

"Sir, there requires no coronet on your carriage to tell me you are a nobleman," said the colonel. "I like frank manners, and I like your team. I know few things that would please me more than to try them."

They were four roans, highly bred, with black manes and tails. They had the Arab eye, with arched necks, and seemed proud of themselves and their master.

"I do not see why we should not go to Blenheim," said the colonel.

"Well, not to-day," said the lady, "I think. We have had an escape, but one feels these things a little more afterward than at the time. I would rather go back to Oxford and be quiet; and there is more than one college which you have not yet seen."

"My team is entirely at your service wherever you go," said Lothair; "but I cannot venture to drive you to Oxford, for I am there in statu pupillari and a proctor might arrest us all. But perhaps," and he approached the lady, "you will permit me to call on you to-morrow, when I hope I may find you have not suffered by this misadventure."

"We have got a professor dining with us to-day at seven o'clock," said the colonel, "at our hotel, and if you be disengaged and would join the party you would add to the favors which you know so well how to confer."

Lothair handed the lady into the carriage, the colonel mounted the box and took the ribbons like a master, and the four roans trotted away with their precious charge and their two grooms behind with folded arms and imperturbable countenances.

Lothair watched the equipage until it vanished in the distance.

"It is impossible to forget that countenance," he said; "and I fancy I did hear at the time that she had married an American. Well, I shall meet her at dinner—that is something." And he sprang into his saddle.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Oxford professor, who was the guest of the American colonel, was quite a young man, of advanced opinions on all subjects, religious, social, and political. He was clever, extremely well-informed, so far as books can make a man knowing, but unable to profit even by his limited experience of life from a restless vanity and overflowing conceit, which prevented him from ever observing or thinking of any thing but himself. He was gifted with a great command of words, which took the form of endless exposition, varied by sarcasm and passages of ornate jargon. He was the last person one would have expected to recognize in an Oxford professor; but we live in times of transition.

A Parisian man of science, who had passed his life in alternately fighting at barricades and discovering planets, had given Colonel Campian, who had lived much in the French capital, a letter of introduction to the professor, whose invectives against the principles of English society were hailed by foreigners as representative of the sentiments of venerable Oxford. The professor, who was not satisfied with his home career, and, like many men of his order of mind, had dreams of wild vanity which the New World, they think, can alone realize, was very glad to make the colonel's acquaintance, which might facilitate his future movements. So he had lionized the distinguished visitors during the last few days over the university, and had availed himself of plentiful opportunities for exhibiting to them his celebrated powers of exposition, his talent for sarcasm, which he deemed peerless, and several highly-finished, picturesque passages, which were introduced with extemporary art.

The professor was very much surprised when he saw Lothair enter the saloon at the
hotel. He was the last person in Oxford whom he expected to encounter. Like sedentary men of extreme opinions, he was a social parasite, and instead of indulging in his usual invectives against peers and princes, finding himself unexpectedly about to dine with one of that class, he was content only to dazzle and amuse him.

Mrs. Campian only entered the room when dinner was announced. She greeted Lothair with calmness but amenity, and took his offered arm.

"You have not suffered, I hope?" said Lothair.

"Very little, and through your kindness."

"It was a peculiar voice, low and musical, too subdued to call thrilling, but a penetrating voice, so that, however ordinary the observation, it attracted and impressed attention. But it was in harmony with all her appearance and manner. Lothair thought he had never seen any one or any thing so serene; the serenity, however, not of humbleness, nor of merely conscious innocence; it was not devoid of a degree of majesty; what one pictures of Olympian repose. And the countenance was Olympian: a Phidian face, with large gray eyes and dark lashes; wonderful hair, abounding without art, and gathered together by Grecian fillets.

The talk was of Oxford, and was at first chiefly maintained by the colonel and the professor.

"And do you share Colonel Campian's feeling about Old England?" inquired Lothair of his hostess.

"The present interests me more than the past," said the lady, "and the future more than the present."

"The present seems to me as unintelligible as the future," said Lothair.

"I think it is intelligible," said the lady, with a faint smile. "It has many faults, but not, I think, the want of clearness."

"I am not a destructive," said the professor, addressing the colonel, but speaking loudly; "I would maintain Oxford, under any circumstances, with the necessary changes."

"And what are those, might I ask?" inquired Lothair.

"In reality, not much. I would get rid of the religion."

"Get rid of the religion!" said Lothair. "You have got rid of it once," said the professor.

"You have altered, you have what people call reformed it," said Lothair; "but you have not abolished or banished it from the university."

"The shock would not be greater, nor so great, as the change from the papal to the Reformed faith. Besides, universities have nothing to do with religion."

"I thought universities were universal," said Lothair, "and had something to do with every thing."

"I cannot conceive any society of any kind without religion," said the lady.

Lothair glanced at her beautiful brow with devotion as she uttered these words.

Colonel Campian began to talk about horses. After that the professor proved to him that he was related to Edmund Campian, the Jesuit; and then he got to the Gunpowder Plot, which, he was not sure, if successful, might not have beneficially influenced the course of our history. Probably the Irish difficulty would not then have existed.

"I dislike plots," said the lady; "they always fail."

"And, whatever their object, are they not essentially immoral?" said Lothair.

"I have more faith in ideas than in persons," said the lady. "When a truth is uttered, it will, sooner or later, be recognized. It is only an affair of time. It is better that it should mature and naturally germinate than be forced."

"You would reduce us to lotus-eaters," exclaimed the professor. "Action is natural to man. And what, after all, are conspiracies and revolutions but great principles in violent action?"

"I think you must be an admirer of repose," said Lothair to the lady, in a low voice.

"Because I have seen something of action in my life," said the lady, "and it is an experience of wasted energies and baffled thoughts."

When they returned to the saloon, the
colonel and the professor became interested in the constitution and discipline of the American universities. Lothair hung about the lady, who was examining some views of Oxford, and who was ascertaining what she had seen and what she had omitted to visit. They were thinking of returning home on the morrow.

"Without seeing Blenheim?" said Lothair.

"Without seeing Blenheim," said the lady; "I confess to a pang; but I shall always associate with that name your great kindness to us."

"But cannot we for once enter into a conspiracy together," said Lothair, "and join in a happy plot and contrive to go? Besides, I could take you to the private gardens, for the duke has given me a perpetual order, and they are really exquisite."

The lady seemed to smile.

"Theodora," said the colonel, speaking from the end of the room, "what have you settled about your train to-morrow?"

"We want to stay another day here," said Theodora, "and go to Blenheim."

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CHAPTER XXV.

They were in the private gardens at Blenheim. The sun was brilliant over the ornate and yet picturesque scene.

"Beautiful, is it not?" exclaimed Lothair.

"Yes, certainly beautiful," said Theodora. "But, do you know, I do not feel altogether content in these fine gardens? The principle of exclusion on which they are all founded is to me depressing. I require in all things sympathy. You would not agree with me in this. The manners of your country are founded on exclusion."

"But, surely, there are times and places when one would like to be alone."

"Without doubt," said the lady; "only I do not like artificial loneliness. Even your parks, which all the world praises, do not quite satisfy me. I prefer a forest where all may go—even the wild beasts."

"But forests are not at command," said Lothair.

"So you make a solitude and call it peace," said the lady, with a slight smile. "For my part, my perfect life would be a large and beautiful village. I admire Nature, but I require the presence of humanity. Life in great cities is too exhausting; but in my village there should be air, streams, and beautiful trees, a picturesque scene, but enough of my fellow-creatures to insure constant duty."

"But the fulfilment of duty and society, founded on what you call the principle of exclusion, are not incompatible," said Lothair.

"No, but difficult. What should be natural becomes an art; and in every art it is only the few who can be first rate."

"I have an ambition to be a first-rate artist in that respect," said Lothair, thoughtfully.

"That does you much honor," she replied, "for you necessarily embark in a most painful enterprise. The toiling multitude have their sorrows, which, I believe, will some day be softened, and obstacles hard to overcome; but I have always thought that the feeling of satiety, almost inseparable from large possessions, is a surer cause of misery than ungratified desires."

"It seems to me that there is a great deal to do," said Lothair.

"I think so," said the lady.

"Theodora," said the colonel, who was a little in advance with the professor, and turning round his head, "this reminds me of Mirabel," and he pointed to the undulating banks covered with rare shrubs, and touching the waters of the lake.

"And where is Mirabel?" said Lothair.

"It was a green island in the Adriatic," said the lady, "which belonged to Colonel Campian; we lost it in the troubles. Colonel Campian was very fond of it. I try to persuade him that our home was of volcanic origin, and has only vanished and subsided into its native bed."

"And were not you fond of it?"

"I never think of the past," said the lady.

"Oxford is not the first place where I
had the pleasure of meeting you,” Lothair ventured at length to observe.

“Yes, we have met before, in Hyde Park Gardens. Our hostess is a clever woman, and has been very kind to some friends of mine.”

“And have you seen her lately?”

“She comes to see us sometimes. We do not live in London, but in the vicinity. We only go to London for the opera, of which we are devotees. We do not at all enter general society; Colonel Campian only likes people who interest or amuse him, and he is fortunate in having rather a numerous acquaintance of that kind.”

“Rare fortune!” said Lothair.

“Colonel Campian lived a great deal at Paris before we married,” said the lady, “and in a circle of considerable culture and excitement. He is social, but not conventional.”

“And you—are you conventional?”

“Well, I live only for climate and the affections,” said the lady. “I am fond of society that pleases me, that is, accomplished and natural and ingenious; otherwise I prefer being alone. As for atmosphere, as I look upon it as the main source of felicity, you may be surprised that I should reside in your country. I should myself like to go to America, but that would not suit Colonel Campian; and, if we are to live in Europe, we must live in England. It is not pleasant to reside in a country where, if you happen to shelter or succor a friend, you may be subject to a domiciliary visit.”

The professor stopped to deliver a lecture or address on the villa of Hadrian. Nothing could be more minute or picturesque than his description of that celebrated pleasance. It was varied by portraits of the emperor and some of his companions, and, after a rapid glance at the fortunes of the imperial patriciate, wound up with some conclusions favorable to communism. It was really very clever, and would have made the fortune of a literary society.

“I wonder if they had gravel-walks in the villa of Hadrian?” said the colonel.

“What I admire most in your country, my lord, are your gravel-walks, though that lady would not agree with me in that matter.”

“You are against gravel-walks,” said Lothair.

“Well, I cannot bring myself to believe that they had gravel-walks in the garden of Eden,” said the lady.

They had a repast at Woodstock, too late for luncheon, too early for dinner, but which it was agreed should serve as the latter meal.

“That suits me exactly,” said the lady; “I am a great foe to dinners, and indeed to all meals. I think when the good time comes we shall give up eating in public, except perhaps fruit on a green bank with music.”

It was a rich twilight as they drove home, the lady leaning back in the carriage silent. Lothair sat opposite to her, and gazed upon a countenance on which the moon began to glisten, and which seemed unconscious of all human observation.

He had read of such countenances in Grecian dreams; in Corinthian temples, in fanes of Ephesus, in the radiant shadow of divine groves.

CHAPTER XXVI.

When they had arrived at the hotel, Colonel Campian proposed that they should come in and have some coffee; but Theodora did not enforce this suggestion; and Lothair, feeling that she might be wearied, gracefully though unwillingly waived the proposal. Remembering that on the noon of the morrow they were to depart, with a happy inspiration, as he said farewell, he asked permission to accompany them to the station.

Lothair walked away with the professor, who seemed in a conservative vein, and graciously disposed to make several concessions to the customs of an ancient country. Though opposed to the land laws, he would operate gradually, and gave Lothair more than one receipt how to save the aristocracy. Lothair would have preferred talking about the lady they had just
LOTHAIR.

quitted, but, as he soon found the professor could really give him no information about her, he let the subject drop.

But not out of his own mind. He was glad to be alone and brood over the last two days. They were among the most interesting of his life. He had encountered a character different from any he had yet met, had listened to new views, and his intelligence had been stimulated by remarks made casually in easy conversation, and yet to him pregnant with novel and sometimes serious meaning. The voice, too, lingered in his ear, so hushed and deep, and yet so clear and sweet. He leaned over his mantel-piece in teeming reverie.

"And she is profoundly religious," he said to himself; "she can conceive no kind of society without religion. She has arrived at the same conclusion as myself. What a privilege it would be to speak to her on such subjects!"

After a restless night the morrow came. About eleven o'clock Lothair ventured to call on his new friends. The lady was alone; she was standing by the window, reading an Italian newspaper, which she folded up and placed aside when Lothair was announced.

"We propose to walk to the station," said Theodora; "the servants have gone. Colonel Campian has a particular aversion to moving with any luggage. He restricts me to this," she said, pointing to her satchel, in which she had placed the foreign newspaper, "and for that he will not be responsible."

"It was most kind of you to permit me to accompany you this morning," said Lothair; "I should have been grieved to have parted abruptly last night."

"I could not refuse such a request," said the lady; "but do you know, I never like to say farewell, even for four-and-twenty hours? One should vanish like a spirit."

"Then I have erred," said Lothair, "against your rules and principles."

"Say my fancies," said the lady, "my humors, my whims. Besides, this is not a farewell. You will come and see us. Colonel Campian tells me you have promised to give us that pleasure."

"It will be the greatest pleasure to me," said Lothair; "I can conceive nothing greater." And then hesitating a little, and a little blushing, he added, "When do you think I might come?"

"Whenever you like," said the lady; "you will always find me at home. My life is this: I ride every day very early, and far into the country, so I return tamed some two or three hours after noon, and devote myself to my friends. We are at home every evening, except opera nights; and let me tell you, because it is not the custom generally among your compatriots, we are always at home on Sundays."

Colonel Campian entered the room; the moment of departure was at hand. Lothair felt the consolation of being their companion to the station. He had once hoped it might be possible to be their companion in the train; but he was not encouraged.

"Railways have elevated and softened the lot of man," said Theodora, "and Colonel Campian views them with almost a religious sentiment. But I cannot read in a railroad, and the human voice is distressing to me amid the the whirl and the whistling, and the wild panting of the loosened gathering who drag us. And then those terrible grottos—it is quite a descent of Proserpine; so I have no resources but my thoughts."

"And surely that is sufficient," murmured Lothair.

"Not when the past is expelled," said the lady.

"But the future," said Lothair.

"Yes, that is ever interesting, but so vague that it sometimes induces slumber."

The bell sounded; Lothair handed the lady to her compartment.

"Our Oxford visit," she said, "has been a great success, and mainly through you."

The colonel was profuse in his cordial farewells, and it seemed they would never have ended had not the train moved.

Lothair remained upon the platform until it was out of sight, and then exclaimed, "Is it a dream, or shall I ever see her again?"
CHAPTER XXVII.

Lothair reached London late in the afternoon. Among the notes and cards and letters on his table was a long and pressing dispatch from Mr. Putney Giles awaiting his judgment and decision on many points.

"The central inauguration, if I may use the term," said Mr. Putney Giles, "is comparatively easy. It is an affair of expense and of labor—great labor; I may say unremitting labor. But your lordship will observe the other points are not mere points of expense and labor. We have to consult the feelings of several counties where your lordship cannot be present, at least certainly not on this occasion, and yet where an adequate recognition of those sentiments which ought to exist between the proprietor and all classes connected with him ought to be secured. Then Scotland: Scotland is a very difficult business to manage. It is astonishing how the sentiments linger in that country connected with its old independence. I really am quite surprised at it. One of your lordship's most important tenants wrote to me only a few days back that great dissatisfaction would prevail among your lordship's friends and tenantry in Scotland, if that country on this occasion were placed on the same level as a mere English county. It must be recognized as a kingdom. I almost think it would be better if we could persuade Lord Culloden not to attend the English inauguration, but remain in the kingdom of Scotland, and take the chair and the lead throughout the festal ceremonies. A peer of the realm, and your lordship's guardian, would impart something of a national character to the proceedings, and this, with a judicious blazoning on some of the banners of the royal arms of Scotland, might have a conciliatory effect. One should always conciliate. But your lordship, upon all these points, and especially with reference to Lord Culloden, must be a much better judge than I am."

Lothair nearly gave a groan. "I almost wish," he thought, "my minority would never end. I am quite satisfied with things as they are. What is the kingdom of Scotland to me, and all these counties? I almost begin to feel that satiety which she said was inseparable from vast possessions."

A letter from Bertram, reminding him that he had not dined at White's as he had promised, and suggesting some new arrangement, and another from Monsignore Catesby, earnestly urging him to attend a most peculiar and solemn function of the Church next Sunday evening, where the cardinal would officiate and preach, and in which Lady St. Jerome and Miss Arundel were particularly interested, did not restore his equanimity.

A dinner at White's! He did not think he could stand a dinner at White's. Indeed, he was not sure that he could stand any dinner anywhere, especially in this hot weather. There was a good deal in what she said: "One ought to eat alone."

The ecclesiastical function was a graver matter. It had been long contemplated, often talked about, and on occasions looked forward to by him even with a certain degree of eagerness. He wished he had had an opportunity of speaking with her on these matters. She was eminently religious; that she had voluntarily avowed. And he felt persuaded that no light or thoughtless remark could fall from those lips. He wondered to what Church she belonged? Protestant or papal? Her husband, being an American, was probably a Protestant, but he was a gentleman of the South, and with nothing puritanical about him. She was a European, and probably of a Latin race. In all likelihood she was a Roman Catholic.

It was Wednesday evening, and his valet reminded him that he was engaged to dine with Lord and Lady Montairy.

Lothair sighed. He was so absorbed by his new feelings that he shrank from society with a certain degree of aversion. He felt it quite out of his power to fulfil his engagement. He sent an excuse. It was Lothair's first excuse. In short, he "threw over" the Montairys, to whom he was so much attached, whom he so much admired, and whose society he had hitherto so highly prized.
To "throw over" a host is the most heinous of social crimes. It ought never to be pardoned. It disjoins a party, often defeats the combinations which might affect the results of a season, and generally renders the society incoherent and unsatisfactory. If the outrage could ever be condoned, it might be in the instance of a young man very inexperienced, the victim of some unexpected condition of nervous feelings over which the defaulter has really no control.

It was evening, and the restless Lothair walked forth without a purpose, and in a direction which he rarely visited. "It is a wonderful place," said he, "this London; a nation, not a city; with a population greater than some kingdoms, and districts as different as if they were under different governments and spoke different languages. And what do I know of it? I have been living here six months, and my life has been passed in a park, two or three squares, and half a dozen streets!"

So he walked on and soon crossed Oxford Street, like the Rhine a natural boundary, and then got into Portland Place, and then found himself in the New Road, and then he hailed a cruising Hansom, which he had previously observed was well horsed.

"'Tis the gondola of London," said Lothair as he sprang in.

"Drive on till I tell you to stop."

And the Hansom drove on, through endless boulevards, some bustling, some dingy, some tawdry and glaring, some melancholy and mean; rows of garden gods, planted on the walls of yards full of vases and divinities of concrete, huge railway halls, monster hotels, dissenting chapels in the form of Gothic churches, quaint ancient almshouses that were once built in the fields, and tea-gardens and stingo-houses and knackers' yards. They were in a district far beyond the experience of Lothair, which indeed had been exhausted when he had passed Eustonia, and from that he had been long separated. The way was broad but ill-lit, with houses of irregular size but generally of low elevation, and sometimes detached in smoked-dried gardens. The road was becoming a bridge which crossed a canal, with barges and wharves and timber-yards, when their progress was arrested by a crowd. It seemed a sort of procession; there was a banner, and the lamp-light fell upon a religious emblem. Lothair was interested, and desired the driver not to endeavor to advance. The procession was crossing the road and entering a building.

"It's a Roman Catholic chapel," said a by-stander in answer to Lothair. "I believe it is a meeting about one of their schools. They always have banners."

"I think I will get out," said Lothair to his driver. "This, I suppose, will pay your fare."

The man stared with delight at the sovereignty in his astonished palm, and in gratitude suggested that he should remain and wait for the gentleman, but the restless Lothair declined the proposal.

"Sir, sir," said the man, leaning down his head as low as possible from his elevated seat, and speaking in a hushed voice, "you are a real gentleman. Do you know what all this is?"

"Yes, yes; some meeting about a Roman Catholic school."

The man shook his head. "You are a real gentleman, and I will tell you the truth. They meet about the schools of the order of St. Joseph—over the left—it is a Fenian meeting."

"A Fenian meeting?"

"Ay, ay, and you cannot enter that place without a ticket. Just you try! However, if a gentleman like you wants to go, you shall have my ticket," said the cab-driver; "and here it is. And may I drive to-morrow as true a gentleman as I have driven to-day!"

So saying, he took a packet from his breast-pocket, and opening it offered to Lothair a green slip of paper, which was willingly accepted. "I should like above all things to go," he said, and he blended with the rear of those who were entering the building. The collector of the tickets stared at Lothair and scrutinized his pass, but all was in order, and Lothair was admitted.

He passed through a house and a yard, at the bottom of which was a rather spacious building. When he entered it, he saw in an instant it was not a chapel. It was
what is called a temperance-hall, a room to be hired for public assemblies, with a raised platform at the end, on which were half a dozen men. The hall was tolerably full, and Lothair came in among the last. There were some children sitting on a form placed against the wall of the room, each with a bun which kept them quiet; the banner belonged to this school, and was the banner of St. Joseph.

A man dressed like a priest, and known as Father O’Molloy, came forward. He was received with signs of much sympathy, succeeded by complete silence. He addressed them in a popular and animated style on the advantages of education. They knew what that was, and then they cheered. Education taught them to know their rights. But what was the use of knowing their rights unless they enforced them? That was not to be done by prayer-books, but by something else, and something else wanted a subscription.

This was the object of the meeting and the burden of all the speeches which followed, and which were progressively more outspoken than the adroit introductory discourse. The Saxon was denounced, sometimes with coarseness, but sometimes in terms of picturesque passion; the vast and extending organization of the brotherhood was enlarged on, the great results at hand intimated; the necessity of immediate exertion on the part of every individual pressed with emphasis. All these views and remarks received from the audience an encouraging response; and when Lothair observed men going round with boxes, and heard the clink of coin, he felt very embarrassed as to what he should do when asked to contribute to a fund raised to stimulate and support rebellion against his sovereign. He regretted the rash restlessness which had involved him in such a position.

The collectors approached Lothair, who was standing at the end of the room opposite to the platform, where the space was not crowded.

"I should like to speak to Father O’Molloy," said Lothair; "he is a priest, and will understand my views."

"He is a priest here," said one of the collectors with a sardonic laugh, "but I am glad to say you will not find his name in the directory. Father O’Molloy is on the platform and engaged."

"If you want to speak to the father, speak from where you are," said the other collector. "Here, silence! a gentleman wants to address the meeting."

And there was silence, and Lothair felt extremely embarrassed, but he was not wanting, though it was the first time in his life that he had addressed a public meeting.

"Gentlemen," said Lothair, "I really had no wish to intrude upon you; all I desired was to speak to Father O’Molloy. I wished to tell him that it would have given me pleasure to subscribe to these schools. I am not a Roman Catholic, but I respect the Roman Catholic religion. But I can do nothing that will imply the slightest sanction of the opinions I have heard expressed this evening. For your own sakes——" but here a yell arose which forever drowned his voice.

"A spy, a spy!" was the general exclamation. "We are betrayed! Seize him! Knock him over!" and the whole meeting seemed to have turned their backs on the platform and to be advancing on the unfortunate Lothair. Two of the leaders on the platform at the same time leaped down from it, to direct as it were the enraged populace. But at this moment a man who had been in the lower part of the hall, in the vicinity of Lothair and standing alone, pushed forward, and by his gestures and general mien arrested somewhat the crowd, so that the two leaders who leaped from the platform and bustled through the crowd came in contact with him.

The stranger was evidently not of the class or country of the rest assembled. He had a military appearance, and spoke with a foreign accent when he said, "This is no spy. Keep your people off."

"And who are you?" inquired the leader thus addressed.

"One accustomed to be obeyed," said the stranger.

"You may be a spy yourself," said the leader.
"I will not undertake to say that there are no spies in this room," said the stranger, "but this person is not one, and anybody who touches this person will touch this person at his peril. Stand off, men!" And they stood off. The wave retreated backward, leaving the two leaders in front. A couple of hundred men, a moment before apparently full of furious passion and ready to take refuge in the violence of fear, were cowed by a single human being.

"Why, you are not afraid of one man?" said the leaders, ashamed of their following. "Whatever betides, no one unknown shall leave this room, or it will beBow Street to-morrow morning."

"Nevertheless," said the stranger, "two unknown men will leave this room and with general assent. If any one touches this person or myself I will shoot him dead," and he drew out his revolver, "and as for the rest, look at that," he added, giving a paper to the leader of the Fenian Lodge, "and then give it me back again."

The leader of the Fenian Lodge glanced at the paper; he grew pale, then scarlet, folded the paper with great care and returned it reverentially to the stranger, then looking round to the assembly and waving his hand he said, "All right, the gentlemen are to go."

"Well, you have got out of a scrape, young sir," said the stranger to Lothair when they had escaped from the hall.

"And how can I express my gratitude to you?" Lothair replied.

"Poh!" said the stranger, "a mere affair of common duty. But what surprises me is how you got your pass-ticket."

Lothair told him all.

"They manage their affairs in general wonderfully close," said the stranger, "but I have no opinion of them. I have just returned from Ireland, where I thought I would go and see what they really are after. No real business in them. Their treason is a fairy tale, and their sedition a child talking in its sleep."

They walked together about half a mile, and then the stranger said, "At the end of this we shall get into the City Road, and the land again of omnibus and public conveyances, and I shall wish you good-night."

"But it is distressing to me to part thus," said Lothair. "Pray let me call and pay my respects to my benefactor."

"No claim to any such title," said the stranger; "I am always glad to be of use. I will not trouble you to call on me, for, frankly, I have no wish to increase the circle of my acquaintance. So, good-night; and, as you seem to be fond of a little life, take my advice, and never go about unarmed."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Fenian adventure furnished the distraction which Lothair required. It broke that absorbing spell of sentiment which is the delicious but enervating privilege of the youthful heart; yet, when Lothair woke in the morning from his well-earned slumbers, the charm returned, and he fell at once into a reverie of Belmont, and a speculation when he might really pay his first visit there. Not to-day—that was clearly out of the question. They had separated only yesterday, and yet it seemed an age, and the adventure of another world. There are moods of feeling which defy alike time and space.

But on the morrow, Friday, he might venture to go. But, then, would to-morrow ever come? It seemed impossible. How were the intervening hours to pass? The world, however, was not so devoid of resources as himself, and had already appropriated his whole day. And, first, Monsignore Catesby came to breakfast with him, talking of every thing that was agreeable or interesting, but in reality bent on securing his presence at the impending ecclesiastical ceremony of high import, where his guardian was to officiate, and where the foundation was to be laid of the reconciliation of all churches in the bosom of the true one. Then, in the afternoon, Lothair had been long engaged to a match of pigeon-shooting, in which pastime Bertram excelled. It seemed there was to be a most exciting sweepstakes to-day, in
which the flower of England were to compete; Lothair among them, and for the first time.

This great exploit of arms was to be accomplished at the Castle in the Air, a fantastic villa near the banks of the Thames, belonging to the Duke of Brecon. His grace had been offended by the conduct or the comments of the outer world, which in his pastime had thwarted or dispelled him in the free life of Battersea. The Duke of Brecon was a gentleman easily offended, but not one of those who ever confined their sense of injury to mere words. He prided himself on "putting down" any individual or body of men who chose to come into collision with him. And so in the present instance he formed a club of pigeon-shooters, and lent them his villa for their rendezvous and enjoyment. The society was exquisite, exclusive, and greatly sought after. And the fine ladies, tempted, of course, by the beauty of the scene, honored and inspired the competing confederates by their presence.

The Castle in the Air was a colossal thatched cottage, built by a favorite of King George IV. It was full of mandarins and pagodas and green dragons, and papered with birds of many colors and with vast tails. The gardens were pretty, and the grounds park-like, with some noble cedars and some huge walnut-trees.

The Duke of Brecon was rather below the middle size, but he had a singularly athletic frame not devoid of symmetry. His head was well placed on his broad shoulders, and his mien was commanding. He was narrow-minded and prejudiced, but acute, and endowed with an unbending will. He was an eminent sportsman, and brave even to brutality. His boast was that he had succeeded in every thing he had attempted, and he would not admit the possibility of future failure. Though still a very young man, he had won the Derby, training his own horse; and he successfully managed a fine stud in defiance of the ring, whom it was one of the secret objects of his life to extirpate. Though his manner to men was peremptory, cold, and hard, he might be described as popular, for there existed a superstitious belief in his judgment, and it was known that in some instances, when he had been consulted, he had given more than advice. It could not be said that he was beloved, but he was feared and highly considered. Parasites were necessary to him, though he despised them.

The Duke of Brecon was an avowed admirer of Lady Corisande, and was intimate with her family. The Duchess liked him much, and was often seen at ball or assembly on his arm. He had such excellent principles, she said; was so straightforward, so true and firm. It was whispered that even Lady Corisande had remarked that the Duke of Brecon was the only young man of the time who had "character." The truth is, the duke, though absolute and hard to men, could be soft and deferential to women, and such an exception to a general disposition has a charm. It was said, also, that he had, when requisite, a bewitching smile.

If there were any thing or any person in the world that St. Aldegonde hated more than another, it was the Duke of Brecon. Why St. Aldegonde hated him was not very clear, for they had never crossed each other, nor were the reasons for his detestation, which he occasionally gave, entirely satisfactory: sometimes it was because the duke drove piebalds; sometimes because he had a large sum in the funds, which St. Aldegonde thought disgraceful for a duke; sometimes because he wore a particular hat, though, with respect to this last allegation, it does not follow that St. Aldegonde was justified in his criticism, for in all these matters St. Aldegonde was himself very deficient, and had once strolled up St. James's Street with his dishevelled locks crowned with a wide-awake. Whatever might be the cause, St. Aldegonde generally wound up—"I tell you what, Bertha, if Corisande marries that fellow, I have made up my mind to go to the Indian Ocean. It is a country I never have seen; and Pinto tells me you cannot do it well under five years."

"I hope you will take me, Grenville, with you," said Lady St. Aldegonde, "be-
cause it is highly probable Corisande will marry the duke; mamma, you know, likes him so much."

"Why cannot Corisande marry Carisbrooke," said St. Aldegonde, pouting; "he is a really good fellow, much better-looking, and so far as land is concerned, which after all is the only thing, has as large an estate as the duke."

"Well, these things depend a little upon taste," said Lady St. Aldegonde.

"No, no," said St. Aldegonde; "Corisande must marry Carisbrooke. Your father would not like my going to the Indian Archipelago and not returning for five years, perhaps never returning. Why should Corisande break up our society?—why are people so selfish? I never could go to Brentham again if the Duke of Brecon is always to be there, giving his opinion, and being what your mother calls 'straightforward'—I hate a straightforward fellow. As Pinto says, if every man were straightforward in his opinions, there would be no conversation. The fun of talk is to find out what a man really thinks, and then contrast it with the enormous lies he has been telling all dinner, and, perhaps, all his life."

It was a favorable day for the Castle in the Air; enough, but not too much sun, and a gentle breeze. Some pretty feet, not alone, were sauntering in the gardens, some pretty lips lingered in the rooms sipping tea; but the mass of the fair visitors, marvelously attired, were assembled at the scene of action, seated on chairs and in groups, which assumed something of the form of an amphitheatre. There were many gentlemen in attendance on them, or independent spectators of the sport. The field was large, not less than forty competitors, and comprising many of the best shots in England. The struggle, therefore, was long and ably maintained; but, as the end approached, it was evident that the contest would be between Bertram, Lothair, and the Duke of Brecon.

Lady St. Aldegonde and Lady Montairy were there and their unmarried sister. The married sisters were highly excited in favor of their brother, but Lady Corisande said nothing. At last Bertram missed a bird, or rather his bird, which he had hit, escaped, and fell beyond the enclosure. Lothair was more successful, and it seemed that it might be a tie between him and the duke. His grace, when called, advanced with confident composure, and apparently killed both his birds, when, at this moment, a dog rushed forward and chased one of the mortally-struck pigeons. The blue-rock, which was content to die by the hand of a duke, would not deign to be worried by a dog, and it frantically moved its expiring wings, scaled the paling, and died. So Lothair won the prize.

"Well," said Lady Montairy to Lothair, "as Bertram was not to win, I am glad it was you."

"And you will not congratulate me?" said Lothair to Lady Corisande.

She rather shook her head. "A tournament of doves," she said. "I would rather see you all in the lists of Ashby."

Lothair had to dine this day with one of the vanquished. This was Mr. Brancepeth, celebrated for his dinners, still more for his guests. Mr. Brancepeth was a grave young man. It was supposed that he was always meditating over the arrangement of his menus, or the skilful means by which he could assemble together the right persons to partake of them. Mr. Brancepeth had attained the highest celebrity in his peculiar career. To dine with Mr. Brancepeth was a social incident that was mentioned. Royalty had consecrated his banquets, and a youth of note was scarcely a graduate of society who had not been his guest. There was one person, however, who, in this respect, had not taken his degree, and, as always happens under such circumstances, he was the individual on whom Mr. Brancepeth was most desirous to confer it; and this was St. Aldegonde. In vain Mr. Brancepeth had approached him with vast cards of invitation to hetatombs, and with insinuating little notes to dinners sans façon; proposals which the presence of princes might almost construe into a command, or the presence of some one even more attractive than princes must invest with irresistible charm. It was all in vain. "Not that I dislike Brancepeth," said St. Aldegonde;
"I rather like him: I like a man who can do only one thing, but does that well. But then I hate dinners."

But the determined and the persevering need never despair of gaining their object in this world. And this very day, riding home from the Castle in the Air, Mr. Brancepeth overtook St. Aldegonde, who was lounging about on a rough Scandinavian cob, as dishevelled as himself, listless and groomless. After riding together for twenty minutes, St. Aldegonde informed Mr. Brancepeth, as was his general custom with his companions, that he was bored to very extinction, and that he did not know what he should do with himself for the rest of the day. "If I could only get Pinto to go with me, I think I would run down to the Star and Garter, or perhaps to Hampton Court."

"You will not be able to get Pinto today," said Mr. Brancepeth, "for he dines with me."

"What an unlucky fellow I am!" exclaimed St. Aldegonde, entirely to himself. "I had made up my mind to dine with Pinto to-day."

"And why should you not? Why not meet Pinto at my house?"

"Well, that is not my way," said St. Aldegonde, but not in a decided tone. "You know I do not like strangers, and crowds of wine-glasses, and what is called all the delicacies of the season."

"You will meet no one that you do not know and like. It is a little dinner I made for——" and he mentioned Lothair.

"I like Lothair," said St. Aldegonde, dreamily. "He is a nice boy."

"Well, you will have him and Pinto to yourself."

The large fish languidly rose and swallowed the bait, and the exulting Mr. Brancepeth cantered off to Hill Street to give the necessary instructions.

Mr. Pinto was one of the marvels of English society; the most sought after of all its members, though no one could tell you exactly why. He was a little oily Portuguese, middle-aged, corpulent, and somewhat bald, with dark eyes of sympathy, not unmixed with humor. No one knew who he was, and in a country the most scruti-
May Fair he sometimes gave a dinner to a fine lady, who was as proud of the event as the Queen of Sheba of her visit to Solomon the Great.

When St. Aldegonde arrived in Hill Street, and slouched into the saloon with as uncouth and graceless a general mien as a handsome and naturally graceful man could contrive to present, his keen though listless glance at once revealed to him that he was as he described it at dinner to Hugo Bohun in a social jungle, in which there was a great herd of animals that he particularly disliked, namely, what he entitled "swells." The scowl on his distressed countenance at first intimated a retreat; but after a survey, courteous to his host, and speaking kindly to Lothair as he passed on, he made a rush to Mr. Pinto, and, cordially embracing him, said, "Mind we sit together."

The dinner was not a failure, though an exception to the polished ceremony of the normal Brancepeth banquet. The host headed his table, with the Duke of Brecon on his right and Lothair on his left hand, and "swells" of calibre in their vicinity; but St. Aldegonde sat far away, next to Mr. Pinto, and Hugo Bohun on the other side of that gentleman. Hugo Bohun loved swells, but he loved St. Aldegonde more. The general conversation in the neighborhood of Mr. Brancepeth did not flag: they talked of the sport of the morning, and then, by association of ideas, of every other sport. And then from the sports of England they ranged to the sports of every other country. There were several there who had caught salmon in Norway and killed tigers in Bengal, and visited those countries only for that purpose. And then they talked of horses, and then they talked of women.

Lothair was rather silent; for in this society of ancients, the youngest of whom was perhaps not less than five-and-twenty, and some with nearly a lustre added to that mature period, he felt the awkward modesty of a freshman. The Duke of Brecon talked much, but never at length. He decided every thing, at least to his own satisfaction; and if his opinion were challenged, remained unshaken, and did not conceal it.

All this time a different scene was enacting at the other end of the table. St. Aldegonde, with his back turned to his other neighbor, hung upon the accents of Mr. Pinto, and Hugo Bohun imitated St. Aldegonde. What Mr. Pinto said or was saying was quite inaudible, for he always spoke low, and in the present case he was invisible, like an ortolan smothered in vine-leaves; but every now and then St. Aldegonde broke into a frightful shout, and Hugo Bohun tittered immensely. Then St. Aldegonde, throwing himself back in his chair, and talking to himself or the ceiling, would exclaim, "Best thing I ever heard," while Hugo nodded sympathy with a beaming smile.

The swells now and then paused in their conversation and glanced at the scene of disturbance.

"They seem highly amused there," said Mr. Brancepeth. "I wish they would pass it on."

"I think St. Aldegonde," said the Duke of Brecon, "is the least conventional man of my acquaintance."

Notwithstanding this stern sneer, a practised general like Mr. Brancepeth felt he had won the day. All his guests would disperse and tell the world that they had dined with him and met St. Aldegonde, and tomorrow there would be a blazoned paragraph in the journals commemorating the event, and written as if by a herald. What did a little disturb his hospitable mind was that St. Aldegonde literally tasted nothing. He did not care so much for his occasionally leaning on the table with both his elbows, but that he should pass by every dish was distressing. So Mr. Brancepeth whispered to his own valet—a fine gentleman, who stood by his master's chair and attended on no one else, except, when requisite, his master's immediate neighbor—and desired him to suggest to St. Aldegonde whether the side-table might not provide, under the difficulties, some sustenance. St. Aldegonde seemed quite gratified by the attention, and said he should like to have some cold meat. Now, that was the only thing the side-table, bounteous as was its disposition, could not provide. All the joints of the season were named in vain, and pies and preparations of
many climates. But nothing would satisfy St. Aldegondé but cold meat.

"Well, now I shall begin my dinner," he said to Pinto, when he was at length served.

"What surprises me most in you is your English. There is not a man who speaks such good English as you do."

"English is an expressive language," said Mr. Pinto, "but not difficult to master. Its range is limited. It consists, as far as I can observe, of four words: 'nice,' 'jolly,' 'charming,' and 'bore;' and some grammarians add 'fond.'"

When the guests rose and returned to the saloon, St. Aldegondé was in high spirits, and talked to every one, even to the Duke of Brecon, whom he considerably reminded of his defeat in the morning, adding that from what he had seen of his grace's guns he had no opinion of them, and that he did not believe that breech-loaders suited pigeon-shooting.

Finally, when he bade farewell to his host, St. Aldegondé assured him that he "never in his life made so good a dinner, and that Pinto had never been so rich."

When the party broke up, the majority of the guests went, sooner or later, to a ball that was given this evening by Lady St. Jerome. Others, who never went to balls, looked forward with refined satisfaction to a night of unbroken tobacco. St. Aldegondé went to play whist at the house of a lady who lived out of town. "I like the drive home," he said; "the morning air is so refreshing when one has lost one's money."

A ball at St. Jerome House was a rare event, but one highly appreciated. It was a grand mansion, with a real suite of state apartments, including a genuine ballroom in the Venetian style, and lighted with chandeliers of rock-crystal. Lady St. Jerome was a woman of taste and splendor and romance, who could do justice to the scene and occasion. Even Lord St. Jerome, quiet as he seemed, in these matters was popular with young men. It was known that Lord St. Jerome gave, at his ball suppers, the same champagne that he gave at his dinners, and that was of the highest class. In short, a patriot. We talk with wondering execration of the great poisoners of past ages, the Borgias, the inventor of aqua tofana, and the amiable Marchioness de Brinvilliers; but Pinto was of opinion that there were more social poisoners about in the present day than in the darkest, and the most demoralized periods, and then none of them are punished; which is so strange, he would add, as they are all found out.

Lady St. Jerome received Lothair, as Pinto said, with extreme unction. She looked in his eyes, she retained his hand, she said that what she had heard had made her so happy. And then, when he was retiring, she beckoned him back and said she must have some tea, and, taking his arm, they walked away together. "I have so much to tell you," she said, "and everything is so interesting. I think we are on the eve of great events. The monsignore told me your heart was with us. It must be. They are your own thoughts, your own wishes. We are realizing your own ideal. I think next Sunday will be remembered as a great day in English history; the commencement of a movement that may save every thing. The monsignore, I know, has told you all."

Not exactly; the Oxford visit had changed a little the plans of the monsignore, but he had partially communicated the vast scheme. It seems there was a new society to be instituted for the restoration of Christendom. The change of name from Christendom to Europe had proved a failure and a disastrous one. "And what wonder?" said Lady St. Jerome. "Europe is not even a quarter of the globe, as the philosophers pretended it was. There is already a fifth division, and probably there will be many more, as the philosophers announce it impossible." The cardinal was to inaugurate the institution on Sunday next at the Jesuits' Church, by one of his celebrated sermons. It was to be a function of the highest class. All the faithful of consideration were to attend, but the attendance was not to be limited to the faithful. Every sincere adherent of church principles who was in a state of prayer and preparation, was solicited to be present and join in the holy and common work of restoring to the
Divine Master His kingdom upon earth with its rightful name.

It was a brilliant ball. All the "nice" people in London were there. All the young men who now will never go to balls were present. This was from respect to the high character of Lord St. Jerome. Clare Arundel looked divine, dressed in a wondrous white robe garlanded with violets, just arrived from Paris, a present from her god-mother, the Duchess of Lorraine-Schulenbourg. On her head a violet-wreath, deep and radiant as her eyes, and which admirably contrasted with her dark golden-brown hair.

Lothair danced with her, and never admired her more. Her manner toward him was changed. It was attractive, even alluring. She smiled on him, she addressed him in tones of sympathy, even of tenderness. She seemed interested in all he was doing; she flattered him by a mode which is said to be irresistible to a man, by talking only of himself. When the dance had finished, he offered to attend her to the tea-room. She accepted the invitation even with cordiality.

"I think I must have some tea," she said, "and I like to go with my kinsman."

Just before supper was announced, Lady St. Jerome told Lothair, to his surprise, that he was to attend Miss Arundel to the great ceremony. "It is Clare's ball," said Lady St. Jerome, "given in her honor, and you are to take care of her."

"I am more than honored," said Lothair. "But does Miss Arundel wish it, for, to tell you the truth, I thought I had rather abused her indulgence this evening?"

"Of course she wishes it," said Lady St. Jerome. "Who should lead her out on such an occasion—her own ball—than the nearest and dearest relation she has in the world, except ourselves?"

Lothair made no reply to this unanswerable logic, but was as surprised as he was gratified. He recalled the hour when the kinship was, at the best, but coldly recognized, the inscrutable haghtiness, even distrust, with which Miss Arundel listened to the exposition of his views and feelings, and the contrast which her past mood presented to her present brilliant sympathy and cordial greeting. But he yielded to the magic of the flowing hour. Miss Arundel seemed, indeed, quite a changed being to-night, full of vivacity, fancy, feeling—almost fun. She was witty, and humorous, and joyous, and fascinating. As he fed her with cates as delicate as her lips, and manufactured for her dainty beverages which would not outrage their purity, Lothair, at last, could not refrain from intimating his sense of her unusual but charming joyousness.

"No," she said, turning round with animation, "my natural disposition, always repressed, because I have felt overwhelmed by the desolation of the world. But now I have hope; I have more than hope, I have joy. I feel sure this idea of the restoration of Christendom comes from Heaven. It has restored me to myself, and has given me a sense of happiness in this life which I never could contemplate. But what is the climax of my joy is, that you, after all my own blood, and one in whose career I have ever felt the deepest interest, should be ordained to lay, as it were, the first stone of this temple of divine love."

It was break of day when Lothair jumped into his brougham. "Thank heavens," he exclaimed, "it is at last Friday!"

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CHAPTER XXIX.

There is something very pleasant in a summer suburban ride in the valley of the Thames. London transforms itself into bustling Knightsbridge, and airy Brompton, brightly and gracefully, lingers cheerfully in the long, miscellaneous, well-watered King's-road, and only says farewell when you come to an abounding river and a picturesque bridge. The boats were bright upon the waters when Lothair crossed it, and his dark chestnut barb, proud of its resplendent form, curveted with joy when it reached a green common, studded occasionally with a group of pines and well-bedecked with gorse. After this he pursued the public road for a couple of miles
until he observed on his left hand a gate on which was written "private road," and here he stopped. The gate was locked, but, when Lothair assured the keeper that he was about to visit Belmont, he was permitted to enter.

He entered a green and winding lane, fringed with tall elms, and dim with fragrant shade, and, after proceeding about half a mile, came to a long, low-built lodge, with a thatched and shelving roof, and surrounded by a rustic colonnade covered with honeysuckle. Passing through the gate at hand, he found himself in a road winding through gently-undulating banks of exquisite turf, studded with rare shrubs, and, occasionally, rarer trees. Suddenly the confined scene expanded; wide lawns spread out before him, shadowed with the dark forms of many huge cedars, and blazing with flower-beds of every hue. The house was also apparent, a stately mansion of hewn stone, with wings and a portico of Corinthian columns, and backed by deep woods.

This was Belmont, built by a favorite minister of state, to whom a grateful and gracious sovereign had granted a slice of a royal park whereon to raise a palace and a garden, and find occasionally Tuscan repose.

The lady of the mansion was at home, and, though Lothair was quite prepared for this, his heart beat. The inner hall was of noble proportion, and there were ranged in it many Roman busts, and some ancient slabs and altars of marble. These had been collected some century ago by the minister; but what immediately struck the eye of Lothair were two statues by an American artist, and both of fame, the Sybil and the Cleopatra. He had heard of these, but had never seen them, and could not refrain from lingering a moment to gaze upon their mystical and fascinating beauty.

He proceeded through two spacious and lofty chambers, of which it was evident the furniture was new. It was luxurious and rich, and full of taste; but there was no attempt to recall the past in the details; no cabinets and clocks of French kings, or tables of French queens, no chairs of Venetian senators, no candelabra, that had illumined Doges of Genoa, no ancient porcelain of rare schools, and ivory carvings and choice enamels. The walls were hung with master-pieces of modern art, chiefly of the French school, Ingres and Delaroche and Scheffer.

The last saloon led into a room of smaller dimensions, opening on the garden, and which Lothair at first thought must be a fernery, it seemed so full of choice and expanding specimens of that beautiful and multiform plant; but, when his eye had become a little accustomed to the scene and to the order of the groups, he perceived they were only the refreshing and profuse ornaments of a regularly furnished and inhabited apartment. In its centre was a table covered with writing-materials and books and some music. There was a chair before the table, so placed as if some one had only recently quitted it; a book was open, but turned upon its face, with an ivory cutter by its side. It would seem that the dweller in the chamber might not be far distant. The servant invited Lothair to be seated, and, saying that Mrs. Campian must be in the garden, proceeded to inform his mistress of the arrival of a guest.

The room opened on a terrace adorned with statues and orange-trees, and descending gently into a garden in the Italian style, in the centre of which was a marble fountain of many figures. The grounds were not extensive, but they were only separated from the royal park by a wire fence, so that the scene seemed alike rich and illimitable. On the boundary was a summer-house in the shape of a classic temple, one of those pavilions of pleasure which nobles loved to raise in the last century.

As Lothair beheld the scene with gratification, the servant reappeared on the steps of the terrace and invited him to descend. Guiding him through the garden, the servant retired as Lothair recognized Mrs. Campian approaching them.

She gave her hand to Lothair and welcomed him cordially but with serenity. They mutually exchanged hopes that their return to town had been agreeable. Lo-
that he was with Belmont.

"I am glad you approve of our hired home," said Theodora; "I think we were fortunate in finding one that suits our tastes and habits. We love pictures and statues and trees and flowers, and yet we love our friends, and our friends are people who live in cities."

"I think I saw two statues to-day of which I have often heard," said Lothair.

"The Sibyl and Cleopatra? Yes, Colonel Campian is rather proud of possessing them. He collects only modern art, for which I believe there is a great future, though some of our friends think it is yet in its cradle."

"I am very sorry to say," said Lothair, "that I know very little about art, or indeed any thing else, but I admire what is beautiful. I know something about architecture, at least church architecture."

"Well, religion has produced some of our finest buildings," said Theodora; "there is no question of that; and as long as they are adapted to what takes place in them they are admirable. The fault I find in modern churches in this country is, that there is little relation between the ceremonies and the structure. Nobody seems now conscious that every true architectural form has a purpose. But I think the climax of confused ideas is capped when dissenting chapels are built like cathedrals."

"Ah! to build a cathedral," exclaimed Lothair, "that is a great enterprise. I wish I might show you some day some drawings I have of a projected cathedral."

"A projected cathedral!" said Theodora. "Well, I must confess to you I never could comprehend the idea of a Protestant cathedral."

"But I am not quite sure," said Lothair, blushing and agitated, "that it will be a Protestant cathedral. I have not made up my mind about that."

Theodora glanced at him, unobserved, with her wonderful gray eyes; a sort of supernatural light seemed to shoot from beneath their long dark lashes and read his inmost nature. They were all this time returning, as she had suggested, to the house. Rather suddenly she said, "By-the-

by, as you are so fond of art, I ought to have asked you whether you would like to see a work by the sculptor of Cleopatra, which arrived when we were at Oxford. We have placed it on a pedestal in the temple. It is the Genius of Freedom. I may say I was assisting at its inauguration when your name was announced to me."

Lothair caught at this proposal, and they turned and approached the temple. Some workmen were leaving the building as they entered, and one or two lingered.

Upon a pedestal of porphyry rose the statue of a female in marble. Though veiled with drapery which might have become the Goddess of Modesty, admirable art permitted the contour of the perfect form to be traced. The feet were without sandals, and the undulating breadth of one shoulder, where the drapery was festooned, remained uncovered. One expected with such a shape some divine visage. That was not wanting; but humanity was asserted in the transcendent brow, which beamed with sublime thought and profound enthusiasm.

Some would have sighed that such beings could only be pictured in a poet's or an artist's dream, but Lothair felt that what he beheld with rapture was no ideal creation, and that he was in the presence of the inspiring original.

"It is too like!" he murmured.

"It is the most successful recurrence to the true principles of art in modern sculpture," said a gentleman on his right hand.

This person was a young man, though more than ten years older than Lothair. His appearance was striking. Above the middle height, his form, athletic though lithe and symmetrical, was crowned by a countenance aquiline but delicate, and from many circumstances of a remarkable radiancy. The lustre of his complexion, the fire of his eye, and his chestnut hair in profuse curls, contributed much to this dazzling effect. A thick but small mustache did not conceal his curved lip or the scornful pride of his distended nostril, and his beard, close but not long, did not veil the singular beauty of his mouth. It was an arrogant face, daring and vivacious, yet weighted
with an expression of deep and haughty thought.

The costume of this gentleman was rich and picturesque. Such extravagance of form and color is sometimes encountered in the adventurous toilet of a country house, but rarely experienced in what might still be looked upon as a morning visit in the metropolis.

"You know Mr. Phæbus?" asked a low, clear voice, and turning round Lothair was presented to a person so famous that even Lothair had heard of him.

Mr. Phæbus was the most successful, not to say the most eminent, painter of the age. He was the descendant of a noble family of Gascony that had emigrated to England from France in the reign of Louis XIV. Unquestionably they had mixed their blood frequently during the interval and the vicissitudes of their various life; but, in Gaston Phæbus, Nature, as is sometimes her wont, had chosen to reproduce exactly the original type. He was the Gascon noble of the sixteenth century, with all his brilliancy, bravery, and bonafides, equally vain, arrogant, and eccentric, accomplished in all the daring or the graceful pursuits of man, yet nursed in the philosophy of our times.

"It is presumption in my talking about such things," said Lothair; "but might I venture to ask what you may consider the true principles of art?"

"Aryan principles," said Mr. Phæbus; "not merely the study of Nature, but of beautiful Nature; the art of design in a country inhabited by a first-rate race, and where the laws, the manners, the customs, are calculated to maintain the health and beauty of a first-rate race. In a greater or less degree, these conditions obtained from the age of Pericles to the age of Hadrian in pure Aryan communities, but Semitism began then to prevail, and ultimately triumphed. Semitism has destroyed art; it taught man to despise his own body, and the essence of art is to honor the human frame."

"I am afraid I ought not to talk about such things," said Lothair; "but, if by Semitism you mean religion, surely the Italian painters inspired by Semitism did something."

"Great things," said Mr. Phæbus—"some of the greatest. Semitism gave them subjects, but the Renaissance gave them Aryan art, and it gave that art to a purely Aryan race. But Semitism rallied in the shape of the Reformation, and swept all away. When Leo the Tenth was pope, popery was pagan; popery is now Christian, and art is extinct."

"I cannot enter into such controversies," said Lothair. "Every day I feel more and more I am extremely ignorant."

"Do not regret it," said Mr. Phæbus. "What you call ignorance is your strength. By ignorance you mean a want of knowledge of books. Books are fatal; they are the curse of the human race. Nine-tenths of existing books are nonsense, and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense. The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing. Printing has destroyed education. Art is a great thing, and Science is a great thing; but all that art and science can reveal can be taught by man and by his attributes—his voice, his hand, his eye. The essence of education is the education of the body. Beauty and health are the chief sources of happiness. Men should live in the air; their exercises should be regular, varied, scientific. To render his body strong and supple is the first duty of man. He should develop and completely master the whole muscular system. What I admire in the order to which you belong is that they do live in the air; that they excel in athletic sports; that they can only speak one language; and that they never read. This is not a complete education, but it is the highest education since the Greek."

"What you say I feel encouraging," said Lothair, repressing a smile, "for I myself live very much in the air, and am fond of all sports; but I confess I am often ashamed of being so poor a linguist, and was seriously thinking that I ought to read."

"No doubt every man should combine an intellectual with a physical training," replied Mr. Phæbus; "but the popular conception of the means is radically wrong. Youth should attend lectures on art and science by the most illustrious professors,
and should converse together afterward on what they have heard. They should learn to talk; it is a rare accomplishment, and extremely healthy. They should have music always at their meals. The theatre, entirely remodelled and reformed, and, under a minister of state, should be an important element of education. I should not object to the recitation of lyric poetry. That is enough. I would not have a book in the house, or even see a newspaper."

"These are Aryan principles?" said Lothair.

"They are," said Mr. Phæbus; "and of such principles, I believe, a great revival is at hand. We shall both live to see another Renaissance."

"And our artist here," said Lothair, pointing to the statue, "you are of opinion that he is asserting these principles?"

"Yes; because he has produced the Aryan form by studying the Aryan form. Phidias never had a finer model, and he has not been unequal to it."

"I fancied," said Lothair, in a lower and inquiring tone, though Mrs. Campian had some time before glided out of the pavilion, and was giving directions to the workmen —"I fancied I had heard that Mrs. Campian was a Roman."

"The Romans were Greeks," said Mr. Phæbus, "and in this instance the Phidian type came out. It has not been thrown away. I believe Theodora has inspired as many painters and sculptors as any Aryan goddess. I look upon her as such, for I know nothing more divine."

"I fear the Phidian type is very rare," said Lothair.

"In nature and in art there must always be surpassing instances," said Mr. Phæbus. "It is a law, and a wise one; but, depend upon it, so strong and perfect a type as the original Aryan must be yet abundant among the millions, and may be developed. But for this you want great changes in your laws. It is the first duty of a state to attend to the frame and health of the subject. The Spartans understood this. They permitted no marriage the probable consequences of which might be a feeble progeny; they even took measures to secure a vigorous one. The Romans doomed the deformed to immediate destruction. The union of the races concerns the welfare of the commonwealth much too nearly to be intrusted to individual arrangement. The fate of a nation will ultimately depend upon the strength and health of the population. Both France and England should look to this; they have cause. As for our mighty engines of war in the hands of a puny race, it will be the old story of the lower empire and the Greek fire. Laws should be passed to secure all this, and some day they will be. But nothing can be done until the Aryan races are extricated from Semitism."

CHAPTER XXX.

LOTHAIR returned to town in a not altogether satisfactory state of mind. He was not serene or content. On the contrary, he was rather agitated and perplexed. He could not say he regretted his visit. He had seen her, and he had seen her to great advantage. He had seen much too that was pleasing, and had heard also many things that, if not pleasing, were certainly full of interest. And yet, when he cantered back over the common, the world somehow did not seem to him so bright and exhilarating as in the ambling morn. Was it because she was not alone? And yet why should he expect she should be alone? She had many friends, and she was as accessible to them as to himself. And yet a conversation with her, as in the gardens of Blenheim, would have been delightful, and he had rather counted on it. Nevertheless, it was a great thing to know men like Mr. Phæbus, and hear their views on the nature of things. Lothair was very young, and was more thoughtful than studious. His education hitherto had been, according to Mr. Phæbus, on the right principle, and chiefly in the open air; but he was intelligent and susceptible, and in the atmosphere of Oxford, now stirred with many thoughts, he had imbibed some particles of knowledge respecting the primeval races which had
permitted him to follow the conversation of Mr. Phebus not absolutely in a state of hopeless perplexity. He determined to confer with Father Coleman on the Aryan race and the genius of Semitism. As he returned through the park, he observed the duchess and Lady Corisande in their barouche, resting for a moment in the shade, with Lord Carisbrooke on one side and the Duke of Brecon on the other.

As he was dressing for dinner, constantly brooding on one thought, the cause of his feeling of disappointment occurred to him. He had hoped in this visit to have established some basis of intimacy, and to have ascertained his prospect and his means of occasionally seeing her. But he had done nothing of the kind. He could not well call again at Belmont under a week, but even then Mr. Phebus or some one else might be there. The world seemed dark. He wished he had never gone to Oxford. However a man may plan his life, he is the creature of circumstances. The unforeseen happens and upsets every thing. We are mere puppets.

He sat next to an agreeable woman at dinner, who gave him an interesting account of a new singer she had heard the night before at the opera—a fair Scandinavian, fresh as a lily and sweet as a nightingale.

"I was resolved to go and hear her," said the lady; "my sister Feodore, at Paris, had written to me so much about her. Do you know, I have never been to the opera for an age! That alone was quite a treat to me. I never go to the opera, nor to the play, nor to any thing else. Society has become so large and so exacting, that I have found out one never gets any amusement."

"Do you know, I never was at the opera?" said Lothair.

"I am not at all surprised; and when you go—which I suppose you will some day—what will most strike you is, that you will not see a single person you ever saw in your life."

"Strange!"

"Yet it shows what a mass of wealth and taste and refinement there is in this wonderful metropolis of ours, quite irrespective of the circles in which we move, and which we have thought entirely engrossed them.

After the ladies had retired, Bertram, who dined at the same house, moved up to him; and Hugo Bohun came over and took the vacant seat on his other side.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" said Hugo. "We have not seen you for a week."

"I went down to Oxford about some horses," said Lothair.

"Fancy going down to Oxford about some horses in the heart of the season," said Hugo. "I believe you are selling us, and that, as the Scorpion announces, you are going to be married."

"To whom?" said Lothair.

"Ah! that is the point. It is a dark horse at present, and we want you to tell us."

"Why do not you marry, Hugo?" said Bertram.

"I respect the institution," said Hugo, "which is admitting something in these days; and I have always thought that every woman should marry, and no man."

"It makes a woman and it mars a man, you think?" said Lothair.

"But I do not exactly see how your view would work practically," said Bertram.

"Well my view is a social problem," said Hugo, "and social problems are the fashion at present. It would be solved through the exceptions, which prove the principle. In the first place, there are your swells who cannot avoid the halter—you are booked when you are born; and then there are moderate men like myself, who have their weak moments. I would not answer for myself if I could find an affectionate family with good shooting and first-rate claret.

"There must be many families with such conditions," said Lothair.

Hugo shook his head. "You try. Sometimes the wine is good and the shooting bad; sometimes the reverse; sometimes both are excellent, but then the tempers and the manners are equally bad."

"I vote we three do something to-morrow," said Bertram.

"What shall it be?" said Hugo.

"I vote we row down to Richmond at sunset and dine, and then drive our teams up by moonlight. What say you, Lothair?"
"I cannot, I am engaged. I am engaged to go to the opera."
"Fancy going to the opera in this sweltering weather!" exclaimed Bertram.
"He must be going to be married," said Hugo.

And yet on the following evening, though the weather was quite as sultry and he was not going to be married, to the opera Lothair went. While the agreeable lady the day before was dilating at dinner on this once famous entertainment, Lothair remembered that a certain person went there every Saturday evening, and he resolved that he should at least have the satisfaction of seeing her.

It was altogether a new scene for Lothair, and, being much affected by music, he found the general influence so fascinating that some little time elapsed before he was sufficiently master of himself to recur to the principal purpose of his presence. His box was on the first tier, where he could observe very generally and yet himself be sufficiently screened. As an astronomer surveys the starry heavens until his searching sight reaches the desired planet, so Lothair's scrutinizing vision wandered till his eye at length lighted on the wished-for orb. In the circle above his own, opposite to him but nearer the stage, he recognized the Campians. She had a star upon her forehead, as when he first met her some six months ago; it seemed an age.

Now what should he do? He was quite unlearned in the social habits of an opera-house. He was not aware that he had the privilege of paying the lady a visit in her box, and, had he been so, he was really so shy in little things that he never could have summoned resolution to open the door of his own box and request an attendant to show him that of Mrs. Campian. He had contrived to get to the opera for the first time in his life, and the effort seemed to have exhausted his social enterprise. So he remained still, with his glass fixed very constantly on Mrs. Campian, and occasionally giving himself up to the scene. The performance did not sustain the first impression. There were rival prima-donnas, and they indulged in competitive screams; the choruses were coarse, and the orchestra much too noisy. But the audience were absorbed or enthusiastic. We may be a musical nation, but our taste would seem to require some refinement.

There was a stir in Mrs. Campian's box: a gentleman entered and seated himself. Lothair concluded he was an invited guest, and envied him. In about a quarter of an hour the gentleman bowed and retired, and another person came in, and one whom Lothair recognized as a young man who had been sitting during the first act in a stall beneath him. The system of paying visits at the opera then flashed upon his intelligence, as some discovery in science upon a painful observer. Why should he not pay a visit too? But how to do it? At last he was bold enough to open the door of his own box and go forth, but he could find no attendant, and some persons passing his open door, and nearly appropriating his lodge, in a fit of that nervous embarrassment which attends inexperience in little things, he secured his rights by returning baffled to his post.

There had been a change in Mrs. Campian's box in the interval. Colonel Campian had quitted it, and Mr. Phæbus occupied his place. Whether it were disappointment at his own failure or some other cause, Lothair felt annoyed. He was hot and cold by turns; felt awkward and blundering; fancied people were looking at him; that in some inexplicable sense he was ridiculous; wished he had never gone to the opera.

As time, and considerable time, elapsed, he became even miserable. Mr. Phæbus never moved, and Mrs. Campian frequently conversed with him. More than one visitor had in the interval paid their respects to the lady, but Mr. Phæbus never moved. They did not stay, perhaps because Mr. Phæbus never moved.

Lothair never liked that fellow from the first. Sympathy and antipathy are our being as day and darkness share our lives. Lothair had felt an antipathy from a Phæbus the moment he saw him. He had arrived at Belmont yesterday before othair, and he had outstayed him. These right be Arian.
principles, but they were not the principles of good-breeding.

Lothair determined to go home, and never to come to the opera again. He opened the door of his box with firmness, and slammed it with courage; he had quite lost his shyness, was indeed ready to run a muck with any one who crossed him. The slamming of the door summoned a scudding attendant from a distant post, who with breathless devotion inquired whether Lothair wanted anything.

"Yes, I want you to show me the way to Mrs. Campian's box."

"Tier above, No. 22," said the box-keeper.

"Ay, ay; but conduct me to it," said Lothair, and he presented the man with an overpowering honorarium.

"Certainly, my lord," said the attendant.

"He knows me," thought Lothair; but it was not so. When the British nation is at once grateful and enthusiastic, they always call you "my lord."

But in his progress to "No. 22, tier above," all his valor evaporated, and when the box-door was opened he felt very much like a convict on the verge of execution; he changed color, his legs tottered, his heart beat, and he made his bow with a confused vision. The serenity of Theodora somewhat reassured him, and he seated himself, and even saluted Mr. Phæbus.

The conversation was vapid and conventional—remarks about the opera and its performers—even the heat of the weather was mentioned. Lothair had come, and he had nothing to say. Mrs. Campian seemed much interested in the performance; so, if he had had anything to say, there was no opportunity of expressing it. She had not appeared to be so engrossed with the music before his arrival. In the mean time that Phæbus would not move; a quarter of an hour elapsed, and that Phæbus would not move. Lothair could not stand it any longer; he rose and bowed.

"Are you going?" said Theodora. "Colonel Campian will be here in a moment; he will be quite grieved not to see you."

But Lothair was inflexible. "Perhaps," she added, "we may see you to-morrow night?"
At first he fell into profound slumber: it was the inevitable result of the Badminton and the late hour. There was a certain degree of physical exhaustion which commanded repose. But the slumber was not long, and his first feeling, for it could not be called thought, was that some great misfortune had occurred to him; and then the thought following the feeling brought up the form of the hated Phœbus. After that he had no real sleep, but a sort of occasional and feverish doze with intervals of infinite distress, waking always to a consciousness of inexpressible mortification and despair.

About one o'clock, relinquishing all hope of real and refreshing slumber, he rang his bell, and his valet appearing informed him that Father Coleman had called, and the monsignore had called, and that now the cardinal's secretary had just called, but the valet had announced that his lord was indisposed. There was also a letter from Lady St. Jerome. This news brought a new train of feeling. Lothair remembered that this was the day of the great ecclesiastical function, under the personal auspices of the cardinal, at which indeed Lothair had never positively promised to assist, his presence at which he had sometimes thought they pressed unreasonably, not to say even indelicately, but at which he had perhaps led them, not without cause, to believe that he would be present. Of late the monsignore had assumed that Lothair had promised to attend it.

Why should he not? The world was all vanity. Never did he feel more convinced than at this moment of the truth of his conclusion, that, if religion were a real thing, man should live for it alone; but then came the question of the Churches. He could not bring himself without a pang to contemplate a secession from the Church of his fathers. He took refuge in the wild but beautiful thought of a reconciliation between Rome and England. If the consecration of the whole of his fortune to that end could assist in effecting the purpose, he would cheerfully make the sacrifice. He would then go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and probably conclude his days in a hermitage on Mount Athos.

In the mean time he rose, and, invigorated by his bath, his thoughts became in a slight degree more mundane. They recurred to the events of the last few days of his life, but in a spirit of self-reproach and of conscious vanity and weakness. Why, he had not known her a week! This was Sunday morning, and last Sunday he had attended St. Mary's and offered up his earnest supplications for the unity of Christendom. That was then his sovereign hope and thought. Singular that a casual acquaintance with a stranger, a look, a glance, a word, a nothing, should have so disturbed his spirit and distracted his mind.

And yet—

And then he fell into an easy-chair, with a hair-brush in either hand, and conjured up in reverie all that had passed since that wondrous morn when he addressed her by the road-side, until the last dark hour when they parted—and forever. There was not a word she had uttered to him, or to any one else, that he did not recall; not a glance, not a gesture—her dress, her countenance, her voice, her hair. And what scenes had all this passed in! What refined and stately loveliness! Blenheim, and Oxford, and Belmont! They became her. Ah! why could not life consist of the perpetual society of such delightful people in such delightful places?

His valet entered and informed him that the monsignore had returned, and would not be denied. Lothair roused himself from his delicious reverie, and his countenance became anxious and disquieted. He would have struggled against the intrusion, and was murmuring resistance to his hopeless attendant, who shook his head, when the monsignore glided into the room without permission, as the valet disappeared.

It was a wonderful performance: the monsignore had at the same time to make a reconnoissance and to take up a position—to find out what Lothair intended to do, and yet to act and speak as if he was acquainted with those intentions, and was not only aware of, but approved them. He seemed hurried and yet tranquil, almost breathless with solicitude and yet conscious of some satisfactory consummation. His tones were
at all times hushed, but to-day he spoke in a whisper, though a whisper of emphasis, and the dark eyes of his delicate aristocratic visage peered into Lothair, even when he was making a remark which seemed to require no scrutiny.

"It is one of the most important days for England that have happened in our time," said the monsignore. "Lady St. Jerome thinks of nothing else. All our nobility will be there—the best blood in England—and some others who sympathize with the unity of the Church, the real question. Nothing has ever gratified the cardinal more than your intended presence. He sent to you this morning. He would have called himself, but he has much to go through to-day. His eminence said to me: 'It is exactly what I want. Whatever may be our differences, and they are really slight, what I want is to show to the world that the sons of the Church will unite for the cause of Divine truth. It is the only course that can save society.' When Lady St. Jerome told him that you were coming this evening, his eminence was so affected that—"

"But I never said I was coming this evening," said Lothair, rather dryly, and resolved to struggle, "either to Lady St. Jerome or to any one else. I said I would think of it."

"But for a Christian to think of duty is to perform it," said the monsignore. "To be ignorant of a duty is a sin, but to be aware of duty, and not to fulfil it, is heinous."

"But is it a duty?" said Lothair, rather doggedly.

"What! to serve God and save society? Do you doubt it? Have you read the 'Declaration of Geneva'? They have declared war against the Church, the state, and the domestic principle. All the great truths and laws on which the family repose are denounced. Have you seen Garibaldi's letter? When it was read, and spoke of the religion of God, being propagated throughout the world, there was a universal cry of 'No, no! no religion!' But the religion of God was soon so explained as to allay all their fears. It is the religion of science. Instead of Adam, our ancestry is traced to the most grotesque of creatures, thought is phosphorus, the soul complex nerves, and our moral sense a secretion of sugar. Do you want these views in England? Rest assured they are coming. And how are we to contend against them? Only by Divine truth. And where is Divine truth? In the Church of Christ—in the gospel of order, peace, and purity."

Lothair rose, and paced the room with his eyes on the ground.

"I wish I had been born in the middle ages," he exclaimed, "or on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or in some other planet: anywhere, or at any time, but in this country and in this age!"

"That thought is not worthy of you, my lord," said Catesby. "It is a great privilege to live in this country and in this age. It is a great privilege, in the mighty contest between the good and the evil principle, to combat for the righteous. They stand face to face now, as they have stood before. There is Christianity, which, by revealing the truth, has limited the license of human reason; there is that human reason which resists revelation as a bondage—which insists upon being atheistical, or polytheistical, or pantheistical—which looks upon the requirements of obedience, justice, truth, and purity, as limitations of human freedom. It is to the Church that God has committed the custody and execution of His truth and law. The Church, as witness, teacher, and judge, contradicts and offends the spirit of license to the quick. This is why it is hated; this is why it is to be destroyed, and why they are preparing a future of rebellion, tyranny, falsehood, and degrading debauchery. The Church alone can save us, and you are asked to supplicate the Almighty to-night, under circumstances of deep hope, to favor the union of churches, and save the human race from the impending deluge."

Lothair threw himself again into his seat and sighed. "I am rather indisposed to-day, my dear monsignore, which is unusual with me, and scarcely equal to such a theme, doubtless of the deepest interest to me and to all. I myself wish, as you well know, that all mankind were praying under
the same roof. I shall continue in seclusion this morning. Perhaps you will permit me to think over what you have said with so much beauty and force."

"I had forgotten that I had a letter to deliver to you," said Catesby; and he drew from his breast-pocket a note which he handed to Lothair, who opened it quite unconsciously of the piercing and even excited observation of his companion.

Lothair read the letter with a changing countenance, and then he read it again and blushed deeply. The letter was from Miss Arundel. After a slight pause, without looking up, he said, "Nine o'clock is the hour, I believe."

"Yes," said the monsignore rather eagerly, "but, were I you, I would be earlier than that. I would order my carriage at eight. If you will permit me, I will order it for you. You are not quite well. It will save you some little trouble, people coming into the room and all that, and the cardinal will be there by eight o'clock."

"Thank you," said Lothair; "have the kindness then, my dear monsignore, to order my brougham for me at half-past eight, and just say that I can see no one. Adieu!"

And the priest glided away.

Lothair remained the whole morning in a most troubled state, pacing his rooms, leaning sometimes with his arm upon the mantel-piece, and his face buried in his arm, and often he sighed. About half-past five he rang for his valet and dressed, and in another hour he broke his fast—a little soup, a cutlet, and a glass or two of claret. And then he looked at his watch; and he looked at his watch every five minutes for the next hour.

He was in deep reverie, when the servant announced that his carriage was ready. He started as from a dream, then pressed his hand to his eyes, and kept it there for some moments, and then, exclaiming, "Jacta est alea," he descended the stairs.

"Where to, my lord?" inquired the servant when he had entered the carriage.

Lothair seemed to hesitate, and then he said, "To Belmont."

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CHAPTER XXXI.

"Belmont is the only house I know that is properly lighted," said Mr. Phæbus, and he looked with complacent criticism round the brilliant saloons. "I would not visit any one who had gas in his house; but even in palaces I find lamps—it is too dreadful. When they came here first, there was an immense chandelier suspended in each of these rooms, pulling down the ceilings, dwarfing the apartments, leaving the guests all in darkness, and throwing all the light on the roof. The chandelier is the great abomination of furniture; it makes a noble apartment look small. And then they say you cannot light rooms without chandeliers! Look at these—need any thing be more brilliant? And all the light in the right place—on those who are in the chamber. All light should come from the side of a room, and if you choose to have candelabra like these you can always secure sufficient."

Theodora was seated on a sofa, in conversation with a lady of distinguished mien and with the countenance of a Roman empress. There were various groups in the room, standing or seated. Colonel Campian was attending a lady to the piano where a celebrity presided, a gentleman with cropped head and a long black beard. The lady was of extraordinary beauty—one of those faces one encounters in Asia Minor, rich, glowing, with dark fringed eyes of tremulous lustre; a figure scarcely less striking, of voluptuous symmetry. Her toilet was exquisite—perhaps a little too splendid for the occasion, but abstractedly of fine taste—and she held, as she sang, a vast bouquet entirely of white stove-flowers. The voice was as sweet as the stephanopolis, and the execution faultless. It seemed the perfection of chamber-singing—no shrieks, and no screams, none of those agonizing experiments which result from the fatal competition of rival prima-donnas.

She was singing when Lothair was ushered in. Theodora rose and greeted him with friendliness. Her glance was that of gratification at his arrival, but the perform-
ance prevented any conversation save a few kind remarks interchanged in a hushed tone. Colonel Campian came up: he seemed quite delighted at renewing his acquaintance with Lothair, and began to talk rather too loudly, which made some of the gentlemen near the piano turn round with glances of wondering reproach. This embarrassed his newly-arrived guest, who in his distress caught the bow of a lady who recognized him, and whom he instantly remembered as Mrs. Putney Giles. There was a vacant chair by her side, and he was glad to occupy it.

"Who is that lady?" inquired Lothair of his companion, when the singing ceased.

"That is Madame Phæbus," said Mrs. Giles.

"Madame Phæbus!" exclaimed Lothair, with an unconscious feeling of some relief. "She is a very beautiful woman. Who was she?"

"She is a Cantacuzene, a daughter of the famous Greek merchant. The Cantacuzzenes, you know, are great people, descendants of the Greek emperors. Her uncle is prince of Samos. Mr. Cantacuzene was very much opposed to the match, but I think quite wrong. Mr. Phæbus is a most distinguished man, and the alliance is of the happiest. Never was such mutual devotion."

"I am not surprised," said Lothair, wonderfully relieved.

"Her sister Euphrosyne is in the room," continued Mrs. Giles, "the most extraordinary resemblance to her. There is just the difference between the matron and the maiden; that is all. They are nearly of the same age, and before the marriage might have been mistaken for each other. The most charming thing in the world is to hear the two sisters sing together. I hope they may to-night. I know the family very well. It was Mrs. Cantacuzene who introduced me to Theodora. You know it is quite en règle to call her Theodora. All the men call her Theodora; 'the divine Theodora' is, I believe, the right thing."

"And do you call her Theodora?" asked Lothair, rather dryly.

"Why, no," said Mrs. Giles, a little confused. "We are not intimate, at least not very. Mrs. Campian has been at my house, and I have been here two or three times; not so often as I could wish, for Mr. Giles, you see, does not like servants and horses to be used on Sundays—and no more do I—and on week-days he is too much engaged or too tired to come out this distance; so you see—"

The singing had ceased, and Theodora approached them. Addressing Lothair, she said: "The Princess of Tivoli wishes that you should be presented to her."

The Princess of Tivoli was a Roman dame of one of the most illustrious houses, but who now lived at Paris. She had in her time taken an active part in Italian politics, and had sacrificed to the cause to which she was devoted the larger part of a large fortune. What had been spared, however, permitted her to live in the French capital with elegance, if not with splendor; and her saloon was the gathering roof, in Paris, of almost every one who was celebrated for genius or accomplishments. Though reputed to be haughty and capricious, she entertained for Theodora an even passionate friendship, and now visited England only to see her.

"Madame Campian has been telling me of all the kind things you did for her at Oxford," said the princess. "Some day you must show me Oxford, but it must be next year. I very much admire the free university life. Tell me now, at Oxford you still have the Protestant religion?"

Lothair ventured to bow assent.

"Ah! that is well," continued the princess. "I advise you to keep it. If we had only had the Protestant religion in Italy, things would have been very different. You are fortunate in this country in having the Protestant religion and a real nobility. Tell me now, in your constitution, if the father sits in the Upper Chamber, the son sits in the Lower House—that I know; but is there any majorat attached to his seat?"

"Not at present."

"You sit in the Lower House, of course?"

"I am not old enough to sit in either House," said Lothair, "but when I am of age, which I shall be when I have the honor of showing Oxford to your highness, I must
sit in the Upper House, for I have not the blessing of a living father."

"Ah! that is a great thing in your country," exclaimed the princess, "a man being his own master at so early an age."

"I thought it was a 'heritage of woe,'" said Lothair.

"No, no," said the princess; "the only tolerable thing in life is action, and action is feeble without youth. What if you do not obtain your immediate object?—you always think you will, and the detail of the adventure is full of rapture. And thus it is the blunders of youth are preferable to the triumphs of manhood, or the successes of old age."

"Well, it will be a consolation for me to remember this when I am in a scrape," said Lothair.

"Oh! you have many, many scrapes waiting you," said the princess. "You may look forward to at least ten years of blunders—that is, illusions—that is, happiness. Fortunate young man!"

Theodora had, without appearing to intend it, relinquished her seat to Lothair, who continued his conversation with the princess, whom he liked, but who, he was sorry to hear, was about to leave England, and immediately—that very night. "Yes," she said, "it is my last act of devotion. You know, in my country we have saints and shrines. All Italians, they say, are fond, are superstitious; my pilgrimage is to Theodora. I must come and worship her once a year."

A gentleman bowed lowly to the princess, who returned his salute with pleased alacrity. "Do you know who that is?" said the princess to Lothair. "That is Baron Gozelius, one of our great reputations. He must have just arrived. I will present you to him; it is always agreeable to know a great man," she added—"at least Goethe says so!"

The philosopher, at her invitation, took a chair opposite the sofa. Though a profound man, he had all the vivacity and passion which are generally supposed to be peculiar to the superficial. He had remarkable conversational power, which he never spared. Lothair was captivated by his eloquence, his striking observations, his warmth, and the flashing of his southern eye.

"Baron Gozelius agrees with your celebrated pastor, Dr. Cumming," said Theodora, with a tinge of demure sarcasm, "and believes that the end of the world is at hand."

"And for the same reasons?" inquired Lothair.

"Not exactly," said Theodora, "but in this instance science and revelation have arrived at the same result, and that is what all desire."

"All that I said was," said Gozelius, "that the action of the sun had become so irregular that I thought the chances were in favor of the destruction of our planet. At least, if I were a public officer, I would not insure it."

"Yet the risk would not be very great under those circumstances," said Theodora.

"The destruction of this world is foretold," said Lothair; "the stars are to fall from the sky; but while I credit, I cannot bring my mind to comprehend, such a catastrophe."

"I have seen a world created and a world destroyed," said Gozelius. "The last was flickering ten years, and it went out as I was watching it."

"And the first?" inquired Lothair, anxiously.

"Disturbed space for half a century—a great pregnancy. William Herschel told me it would come when I was a boy, and I cruised for it through two-thirds of my life. It came at last, and it repaid me."

There was a stir. Euphrosyne was going to sing with her sister. They swept by Lothair in their progress to the instrument, like the passage of sultanas to some kiosk on the Bosporus. It seemed to him that he had never beheld anything so resplendent. The air was perfumed by their movement and the rustling of their wondrous robes. "They must be of the Aryan race," thought Lothair, "tho not of the Phidian type." They sang a Greek air, and their sweet and touching voices blended with exquisite harmony. Every one was silent in the room, because every one was entranced. Then they gave their friends some patriotic lay which required a chorus,
the sisters, in turn, singing a stanza. Mr. Phœbus arranged the chorus in a moment, and there clustered round the piano a number of gentlemen almost as good-looking and as picturesque as himself. Then, while Madame Phœbus was singing, Euphrosyne suddenly, and with quickness, moved away and approached Theodora, and whispered something to her, but Theodora slightly shook her head, and seemed to decline.

Euphrosyne regained the piano, whispered something to Colonel Campian, who was one of the chorus, and then commenced her own part. Colonel Campian crossed the room and spoke to Theodora, who instantly, without the slightest demur, joined her friends. Lothair felt agitated, as he could not doubt Theodora was going to sing. And so it was; when Euphrosyne had finished, and the chorus she had inspired had died away, there rose a deep contralto sound, which, though without effort, seemed to Lothair the most thrilling tone he had ever listened to. Deeper and richer, and richer and deeper, it seemed to become, as it wound with exquisite facility through asymphony of delicious sound, until it ended in a passionate burst, which made Lothair's heart beat so tumultuously that for a moment he thought he should be overpowered.

"I never heard anything so fine in my life," said Lothair to the French philosopher.

"Ah! if you had heard that woman sing the Marseillaise, as I did once, to three thousand people, then you would know what was fine. Not one of us who would not have died on the spot for her!"

The concert was over. The Princess of Tivoli had risen to say farewell. She stood apart with Theodora, holding both her hands, and speaking with earnestness. Then she pressed her lips to Theodora's forehead, and said, "Adieu, my best beloved; the spring will return."

The princess had disappeared, and Madame Phœbus came up to say good-night to her hostess.

"It is such a delicious night," said Theodora, "that I have ordered our strawberries-and-cream on the terrace. You must not go."

And so she invited them all to the terrace. There was not a breath of air, the garden was flooded with moonlight, in which the fountain glittered, and the atmosphere was as sweet as it was warm.

"I think the moon will melt the ice tonight," said Theodora, as she led Madame Phœbus to a table covered with that innocent refreshment in many forms, and pyramids of strawberries, and gentle drinks which the fancy of America could alone devise.

"I wonder we did not pass the whole evening on the terrace," said Lothair.

"One must sing in a room," said Euphrosyne, "or the nightingales would eclipse us."

Lothair looked quickly at the speaker, and caught the glance of a peculiar countenance—mockery blended with Ionian splendor.

"I think strawberries-and-cream the most popular of all food," said Madame Phœbus, as some touched her beautiful lips.

"Yes; and one is not ashamed of eating it," said Theodora.

Soon there was that stir which precedes the breaking up of an assembly. Mrs. Giles and some others had to return to town. Madame Phœbus and Euphrosyne were near neighbors at Roehampton, but their carriage had been for some time waiting. Mr. Phœbus did not accompany them. He chose to walk home on such a night, and descended into the garden with his remaining friends.

"They are going to smoke," said Theodora. "Is it your habit?"

"Not yet."

"I do not dislike it in the air and at a distance; but I banish them the terrace. I think smoking must be a great consolation to a soldier;" and, as she spoke, she moved, and, without formally inviting him, he found himself walking by her side.

Rather abruptly he said, "You wore last night at the opera the same ornament as on the first time I had the pleasure of meeting you."

She looked at him with a smile, and a
little surprised. "My solitary trinket; I fear you will never see any other."

"But you do not despise trinkets?" said Lothair.

"Oh no; they are very well. Once I was decked with jewels and ropes of pearls, like Titian's Queen of Cyprus. I sometimes regret my pearls. There is a reserve about pearls which I like—something soft and dim. But they are all gone, and I ought not to regret them, for they went in a good cause. I kept the star, because it was given to me by a hero; and once we flattered ourselves it was a symbol."

"I wish I were a hero!" said Lothair. "You may yet prove one."

"And if I do, may I give you a star?"

"If it be symbolical."

"But of what?"

"Of an heroic purpose."

"But what is an heroic purpose?" exclaimed Lothair. "Instead of being here to-night, I ought, perhaps, to have been present at a religious function of the highest and deepest import, which might have influenced my destiny, and led to something heroic. But my mind is uncertain and unsettled. I speak to you without reserve, for my heart always entirely opens to you, and I have a sort of unlimited confidence in your judgment. Besides, I have never forgotten what you said at Oxford about religion—that you could not conceive society without religion. It is what I feel myself, and most strongly; and yet there never was a period when religion was so assailed. There is no doubt the atheists are bolder, are more completely organized, both as to intellectual and even physical force, than ever was known. I have heard that from the highest authority. For my own part, I think I am prepared to die for Divine truth. I have examined myself severely, but I do not think I should falter. Indeed, can there be for man a nobler duty than to be the champion of God? But then the question of the churches interferes. If there were only one church, I could see my way. Without a church, there can be no true religion, because otherwise you have no security for the truth. I am a member of the Church of England, and when I was at Oxford I thought the Anglican view might be sustained. But, of late, I have given my mind deeply to these matters, for, after all, they are the only matters a man should think of; and, I confess to you, the claim of Rome to orthodoxy seems to me irresistible."

"You make no distinction, then, between religion and orthodoxy?" said Theodora. "Certainly I make no difference."

"And yet, what is orthodox at Dover is not orthodox at Calais or Ostend. I should be sorry to think that, because there was no orthodoxy in Belgium or France, there was no religion."

"Yes," said Lothair, "I think I see what you mean."

"Then, again, if we go further," continued Theodora, "there is the whole of the East; that certainly is not orthodox, according to your views. You may not agree with all or any of their opinions, but you could scarcely maintain that, as communities, they are irreligious."

"Well, you could not, certainly," said Lothair.

"So you see," said Theodora, "what is called orthodoxy has very little to do with religion; and a person may be very religious without holding the same dogmas as yourself, or, as some think, without holding any."

"According to you, then," said Lothair, "the Anglican view might be maintained."

"I do not know what the Anglican view is," said Theodora. "I do not belong to the Roman or to the Anglican Church."

"And yet, you are very religious," said Lothair.

"I hope so; I try to be so; and, when I fail in any duty, it is not the fault of my religion. I never deceive myself into that; I know it is my own fault."

There was a pause; but they walked on. The soft splendor of the scene and all its accessories, the moonlight, and the fragrance, and the falling waters, wonderfully bewitched the spirit of the young Lothair.

"There is nothing I would not tell you," he suddenly exclaimed, turning to Theodora, "and sometimes I think there is nothing you would not tell me. Tell me, then, I entreat you, what is your religion?"
The true religion, I think," said Theodora. "I worship in a church where I believe God dwells, and dwells for my guidance and my good—my conscience."

"Your conscience may be divine," said Lothair, "and I believe it is; but the consciences of other persons are not divine, and what is to guide them, and what is to prevent or to mitigate the evil they would perpetrate?"

"I have never heard from priests," said Theodora, "any truth which my conscience had not revealed to me. They use different language from what I use, but I find, after a time, that we mean the same thing. What I call time they call eternity; when they describe heaven, they give a picture of earth; and beings whom they style divine, they invest with all the attributes of humanity."

"And yet is it not true," said Lothair, "that—"

But, at this moment, there were the sounds of merriment and of approaching footsteps; the form of Mr. Phoebus appeared ascending the steps of the terrace, followed by others. The smokers had fulfilled their task. There were farewells, and bows, and good-nights. Lothair had to retire with the others, and, as he threw himself into his brougham, he exclaimed: "I perceive that life is not so simple an affair as I once supposed."

CHAPTER XXXII.

When the stranger, who had proved so opportune an ally to Lothair at the Fenian meeting, separated from his companion, he proceeded in the direction of Pentonville, and, after pursuing his way through a number of obscure streets, but quiet, decent, and monotonous, he stopped at a small house in a row of many residences, yet all of them, in form, size, color, and general character, so identical, that the number on the door could alone assure the visitor that he was not in error when he sounded the knocker.

"Ah! is it you, Captain Bruges?" said the smiling and blushing maiden who answered to his summons. "We have not seen you for a long time."

"Well, you look as kind and as pretty as ever, Jenny," said the captain, "and how is my friend?"

"Well," said the damsel, and she shrugged her shoulders, "he mopes. I'm very glad you have come back, captain, for he sees very few now, and is always writing. I cannot bear that writing; if he would only go and take a good walk, I am sure he would be better."

"There is something in that," said Captain Bruges. "And is he at home, and will he see me?"

"Oh! he is always at home to you, captain; but I will just run up and tell him you are here. You know it is long since we have seen you, captain—coming on half a year, I think."

"Time flies, Jenny. Go, my good girl, and I will wait below."

"In the parlor, if you please, Captain Bruges. It is to let now. It is more than a month since the doctor left us. That was a loss, for, as long as the doctor was here, he always had some one to speak with."

So Captain Bruges entered the little dining-room with its mahogany table, and half a dozen chairs, and cellaret, and over the fireplace a portrait of Garibaldi, which had been left as a legacy to the landlady by her late lodger, Dr. Tresorio.

The captain threw a quick glance at the print, and then, falling into reverie, with his hands crossed behind him, paced the little chamber, and was soon lost in thoughts which made him unconscious how long had elapsed when the maiden summoned him.

Following her, and ascending the staircase, he was ushered into the front room of the first floor, and there came forward to meet him a man rather below the middle height, but of a symmetrical and imposing mien. His face was grave, not to say sad; thought, not time, had partially silvered the clustering of his raven hair; but intellectual power reigned in his wide silvered, while determination was the character of the rest of his countenance, under great control, yet apparently, from the dark flashing of his eye, not incompatible with fanaticism.

"General," he exclaimed, "your presence always reanimates me. I shall at least have
some news on which I can rely. Your visit is sudden—sudden things are often happy ones. Is there any thing stirring in the promised land? Speak, speak! You have a thousand things to say, and I have a thousand ears."

"My dear Mirandola," replied the visitor, "I will take leave to call into council a friend whose presence is always profitable."

So saying, he took out a cigar-case, and offered it to his companion.

"We have smoked together in palaces," said Mirandola, accepting the proffer with a delicate white hand.

"But not these cigars," replied the general. "They are superb, my only reward for all my transatlantic work, and sometimes I think a sufficient one."

"And Jenny shall give us a capital cup of coffee," said Mirandola; "it is the only hospitality that I can offer my friends. Give me a light, my general; and now, how are things?"

"Well, at the first glance, very bad; the French have left Rome, and we are not in it."

"Well, that is an infamy not of to-day or yesterday," replied Mirandola, "though not less an infamy. We talked over this six months ago, when you were over here about something else, and from that moment unto the present I have with unceasing effort labored to erase this stigma from the human consciousness, but with no success. Men are changed; public spirit is extinct; the deeds of '48 are to the present generation incomprehensible as the Punic wars, or the feats of Marius against the Cimbri. What we want are the most natural things in the world, and easy of attainment because they are natural. We want our metropolis, our native frontiers, and true liberty. Instead of these, we have compromises, conventions, provincial jealousies, and French prefects. It is disgusting, heart-rending; sometimes I fear my own energies are wan- ing. My health is wretched; writing and speaking are decidedly bad for me, and I pass my life in writing and speaking. Toward evening I feel utterly exhausted, and am sometimes, which I thought I never could be, the victim of despondency. The loss of the doctor was a severe blow, but they hurried him out of the place. The man of Paris would never rest till he was gone. I was myself thinking of once more trying Switzerland, but the obstacles are great; and, in truth, I was at my darkest moment when Jenny brought me the light of your name."

The general, who had bivouacked on a group of small chairs, his leg on one, his elbow on another, took his cigar from his mouth and delivered himself of a volume of smoke, and then said dryly: "Things may not be so bad as they seem, comrade. Your efforts have not been without fruit. I have traced them in many quarters, and, indeed, it is about their possible consequences that I have come over to consult with you."

"Idle words, I know, never escape those lips," said Mirandola; "speak on."

"Well," said the general, "you see that people are a little exhausted by the efforts of last year; and it must be confessed that no slight results were accomplished. The freedom of Venice —"

"A French intrigue," exclaimed Mirandola. "The freedom of Venice is the price of the slavery of Rome. I heard of it with disgust."

"Well, we do not differ much on that head," said the general. "I am not a Roman as you are, but I view Rome, with reference to the object of my life, with feelings not less ardent and absorbing than yourself, who would wish to see it again the empress of the world. I am a soldier, and love war, and, left to myself, would care little perhaps for what form of government I combated, provided the army was constituted on the principles of fraternity and equality; but the passion of my life, to which I have sacrificed military position, and perhaps," he added in a lower tone, "perhaps even military fame, has been to destroy priestcraft, and, so long as the pope rules in Rome, it will be supreme."

"We have struck him down once," said Mirandola.

"And I hope we shall again, and forever," said the general, "and it is about that I would speak. You are in error in supposing that your friends do not sympathize with you, or that their answers are
dilatory or evasive. There is much astir; the old spirit is not extinct, but the difficulties are greater than in former days when we had only the Austrians to encounter, and we cannot afford to make another failure."

"There could be no failure if we were clear and determined. There must be a hundred thousand men who would die for our metropolis, our natural frontiers, and true liberty. The mass of the pseudo-Italian army must be with us. As for foreign interference, its repetition seems to me impossible. The brotherhood in the different countries, if well guided, could alone prevent it. There should be at once a manifesto addressed to the peoples. They have become absorbed in money-grubbing and what they call industry. The external life of a nation is its most important one. A nation, as an individual, has duties to fulfil appointed by God and His moral law; the individual toward his family, his town, his country; the nation toward the country of countries, humanity—the outward world. I firmly believe that we fail and renounce the religious and divine element of our life whenever we betray or neglect those duties. The internal activity of a nation is important and sacred because it prepares the instrument for its appointed task. It is mere egotism if it converges toward itself, degrading and doomed to expiration—as will be the fate of this country in which we now dwell," added Mirandola in a hushed voice. "England had a mission; it had belief; and it had power. It announced itself the representative of religious, commercial, and political freedom, and yet, when it came to action, it allowed Denmark to be crushed by Austria and Prussia, and, in the most nefarious transaction of modern times, uttered the approving shriek of 'Perish Savoy!'"

"My dear Mirandola," said the general, trimming his cigar, "there is no living man who appreciates your genius and your worth more than myself; perhaps I might say there is no living man who has had equal opportunities of estimating them. You formed the mind of our country; you kindled and kept alive the sacred flame when all was gloom, and all were without heart. Such prodigious devotion, so much resource and pertinacity and patience, such unbroken spirit, were never before exhibited by man; and, whatever may be said by your enemies, I know that in the greatest hour of action you proved equal to it; and yet at this moment, when your friends are again stirring, and there is a hope of spring, I am bound to tell you that there are only two persons in the world who can effect the revolution, and you are not one of them."

"I am ardent, my general, perhaps too sanguine, but I have no self-love, at least none when the interests of the great cause are at stake. Tell me, then, their names, and count, if required, on my cooperation."

"Garibaldi and Mary-Anne."

"A Polchinello and a Bayadere!" exclaimed Mirandola, and, springing from his seat, he impatiently paced the room. "And yet," continued the general calmly, "there is no manner of doubt that Garibaldi is the only name that could collect ten thousand men at any given point in Italy; while in France, though her influence is mythical, the name of Mary-Anne is a name of magic. Though never mentioned, it is never forgotten. And the slightest allusion to it among the initiated will open every heart. There are more secret societies in France at this moment than at any period since '85, though you hear nothing of them; and they believe in Mary-Anne, and in nothing else."

"You have been at Caprera?" said Mirandola.

"I have been at Caprera."

"And what did he say?"

"He will do nothing without the sanction of the Savoyard."

"He wants to get wounded in his other foot," said Mirandola, with savage sarcasm. "Will he never weary of being betrayed?"

"I found him calm and sanguine," said the general.

"What of the woman?"

"Garibaldi will not move without the Savoyard, and Mary-Anne will not move without Garibaldi; that is the situation."

"Have you seen her?"
"Not yet; I have been to Caprera, and I have come over to see her and you. Italy is ready for the move, and is only waiting for the great man. He will not act without the Savoyard; he believes in him. I will not be skeptical. There are difficulties enough without imagining any. We have no money, and all our sources of supply are drained; but we have the inspiration of a sacred cause, we have you—we may gain others—and, at any rate, the French are no longer at Rome."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"The Goodwood Cup, my lord—the Doncaster. This pair of flagons for his highness the Khédive—something quite new—yes, parcel-gilt, the only style now—it gives relief to design—yes, by Monti, a great man, hardly inferior to Flaxman, if at all. Flaxman worked for Rundell and Bridge in the old days—one of the principal causes of their success. Your lordship's gold service was supplied by Rundell and Bridge. Very fine service indeed, much by Flaxman—nothing of that kind seen now."

"I never did see it," said Lothair. He was replying to Mr. Ruby, a celebrated jeweller and goldsmith, in a celebrated street, who had saluted him when he had entered the shop, and called the attention of Lothair to a group of treasures of art.

"Strange," said Mr. Ruby, smiling. "It is in the next room, if your lordship would like to see it. I think your lordship should see your gold service. Mr. Putney Giles ordered it here to be examined and put in order."

"I should like to see it very much," said Lothair, "though I came to speak to you about something else."

And so Lothair, following Mr. Ruby into an inner apartment, had the gratification, for the first time, of seeing his own service of gold plate laid out in completeness, and which had been for some time exhibited to the daily admiration of that favored portion of the English people who frequent the brilliant and glowing counters of Mr. Ruby.

Not that Lothair was embarrassed by their presence at this moment. The hour of their arrival had not yet come. Business had not long commenced when Lothair entered the shop, somewhat to the surprise of its master. Those who know Bond Street only in the blaze of fashionable hours can form but an imperfect conception of its matutinal charm, when it is still shady and fresh—when there are no carriages, rarely a cart, and passers-by gliding about on real business. One feels as in some Continental city. Then there are time and opportunity to look at the shops; and there is no street in the world that can furnish such a collection, filled with so many objects of beauty, curiosity, and interest. The jewellers and goldsmiths and dealers in rare furniture, porcelain, and cabinets, and French pictures, have long fixed upon Bond Street as their favorite quarter, and are not chary of displaying their treasures; though it may be a question whether some of the magazines of fancy food—delicacies culled from all the climes and regions of the globe—particularly at the matin hour, may not, in their picturesque variety, be the most attractive. The palm, perhaps, would be given to the fishmongers, with their exuberant exhibitions, grouped with skill, startling often with strange forms, dazzling with prismatic tints, and breathing the invigorating redolence of the sea.

"Well, I like the service," said Lothair, "and am glad, as you tell me, that its fashion has come round again, because there will now be no necessity for ordering a new one. I do not myself much care for plate. I like flowers and porcelain on a table, and I like to see the guests. However, I suppose it is all right, and I must use it. It was not about plate that I called; I wanted to speak to you about pearls."

"Ah!" said Mr. Ruby, and his face brightened; and, ushering Lothair to some glass cases, he at the same time provided his customer with a seat.

"Something like that?" said Mr. Ruby, who by this time had slid into his proper side of the counter, and was unlocking the
...he touched one with the long nail of his little finger; "that is worth seven hundred guineas, the whole packet worth perhaps ten thousand pounds."

"Very interesting," said Lothair, "but what I want are pearls. That necklace which you have shown me is like the necklace of a doll. I want pearls, such as you see them in Italian pictures—Titians and Giorgiones—such as a Queen of Cyprus would wear. I want ropes of pearls."

"Ah!" said Mr. Ruby, "I know what your lordship means. Lady Bideford had something of that kind. She very much deceived us—always told us her necklace must be sold at her death, and she had very bad health. We waited, but when she went, poor lady, it was claimed by the heir, and is in chancery at this very moment. The Justinianis have ropes of pearls—Madame Justiniani of Paris, I have been told, gives a rope to every one of her children when they marry—but there is no expectation of a Justiniani parting with any thing. Pearls are troublesome property, my lord. They require great care; they want both air and exercise; they must be worn frequently; you cannot lock them up. The Duchess of Havant has the finest pearls in this country, and I told her grace, 'Wear them wherever you can; wear them at breakfast,' and her grace follows my advice—she does wear them at breakfast. I go down to Havant Castle every year to see her grace's pearls, and I wipe every one of them myself, and let them lie on a sunny bank in the garden, in a westerly wind, for hours and days together. Their complexion would have been ruined had it not been for this treatment. Pearls are like girls, my lord—they require quite as much attention."

"Then you cannot give me what I want?" said Lothair.

"Well, I can, and I cannot," said Mr. Ruby. "I am in a difficulty. I have in this house exactly what your lordship requires, but I have offered them to Lord Topaz, and I have not received his answer. We have instructions to inform his lordship of every very precious jewel that we obtain, and give him the preference as a purchaser. Nevertheless, there is no one I could more desire to oblige..."
than your lordship—young lordship has every claim upon us, and I should be truly glad to find these pearls in your lordship's possession if I could only see my way. Perhaps your lordship would like to look at them?"

"Certainly, but pray do not leave me here alone with all these treasures," said Lothair, as Mr. Ruby was quitting the apartment.

"Oh! my lord, with you!"

"Yes, that is all very well; but, if anything is missed hereafter, it will always be remembered that these jewels were in my possession, and I was alone. I highly object to it." But Mr. Ruby had vanished, and did not immediately reappear. In the mean time it was impossible for Lothair to move: he was alone, and surrounded with precious necklaces, and glittering rings, and gorgeous bracelets, with loose diamonds running over the counter. It was not a kind or an amount of property that Lothair, relinquishing the trust, could satisfactorily deliver to a shopman. The shopman, however honest, might be suddenly tempted by Satan, and take the next train to Liverpool. He felt therefore relieved when Mr. Ruby re-entered the room, breathless, with a velvet casket. "I beg pardon, my lord, a thousand pardons, but I thought I would just run over to Lord Topaz, only in the square close by. His lordship is at Madrid, the only city one cannot depend on communications with by telegraph. Spaniards strange people, very prejudiced, take all sorts of fancies in their head. Besides, Lord Topaz has more pearls than he can know to what to do with, and I should like your lordship to see these," and he opened the casket.

"Exactly what I want," exclaimed Lothair; "these must be the very pearls the Queen of Cyprus wore. What is their price?"

"They are from Genoa, and belonged to a doge," said Mr. Ruby; "your lordship shall have them for the sum we gave for them. There shall be no profit on the transaction, and we shall be proud of it. We gave for them four thousand guineas."

"I will take them with me," said Lothair, who was afraid, if he left them behind, Lord Topaz might arrive in the interval.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Lothair had returned home from his last visit to Belmont agitated by many thoughts, but, generally speaking, deeply musing over its mistress. Considerable speculation on religion, the churches, the solar system, the cosmical order, the purpose of creation, and the destiny of man, was maintained in his too rapid progress from Rochamptown to his Belgravian hotel; but the association of ideas always terminated the consideration of every topic by a wondering and deeply interesting inquiry when he should see her again. And here, in order to simplify this narrative, we will at once chronicle the solution of this grave question. On the afternoon of the next day, Lothair mounted his horse with the intention of calling on Lady St. Jerome, and perhaps some other persons, but it is curious to observe that he soon found himself on the road to Rochamptown, where he was in due time paying a visit to Theodora. But what is more remarkable is that the same result occurred every day afterward. Regularly every day he paid a visit to Belmont. Nor was this all; very often he paid two visits, for he remembered that in the evening Theodora was always at home. Lothair used to hurry to town from his morning visit, dine at some great house, which satisfied the demands of society, and then drive down to Rochamptown. The guests of the evening saloon, when they witnessed the high ceremony of Lothair's manner, which was natural to him, when he entered, and the welcome of Theodora, could hardly believe that a few hours only had elapsed since their separation.

And what was the manner of Theodora to him when they were alone? Precisely as before. She never seemed in the least surprised that he called on her every day, or even twice a day. Sometimes she was alone, frequently she had companions, but she was always the same, always appeared gratified at his arrival, and always extended to him the same welcome, graceful and genial, but without a spark of coquetry. Yet she did not affect to conceal that she took a certain interest in him, because she was careful to
The ingenuity of Hugo Bohun, though he generally found out every thing.

The great difficulty which Lothair had to apprehend was with his Roman Catholic friends. The system of the monsignori was never to let him be out of sight, and his absence from the critical function had not only disappointed but alarmed them. But the Jesuits are wise men; they never lose their temper. They knew when to avoid scenes as well as when to make them. Monsignore Catesby called on Lothair as frequently as before, and never made the slightest allusion to the miscarriage of their expectations. Strange to say, the innocent Lothair, naturally so straightforward and so honorable, found himself instinctively, almost it might be said unconsciously, defending himself against his invaders with some of their own weapons. He still talked about building his cathedral, of which, not contented with mere plans, he even gave orders that a model should be made, and he still received statements on points of faith from Father Coleman, on which he made marginal notes and queries. Monsignore Catesby was not altogether satisfied. He was suspicious of some disturbing cause, but at present it baffled him. Their hopes, however, were high; and they had cause to be sanguine. In a month’s time or so, Lothair would be in the country to celebrate his majority; his guardian the cardinal was to be his guest; the St. Jeromes were invited, Monsignore Catesby himself. Here would be opportunity and actors to avail themselves of it.

It was a very few days after the first evening visit of Lothair to Belmont that he found himself one morning alone with Theodora. She was in her bowery boudoir, copying some music for Madame Phæbus, at least in the intervals of conversation. That had not been of a grave character, but the contrary, when Lothair rather abruptly said, “Do you agree, Mrs. Campian, with what Mr. Phæbus said the other night, that the greatest pain must be the sense of death?”

“Then mankind is generally spared the greatest pain,” she replied, “for I apprehend few people are sensible of death—unless
Indeed,” she added, “it be on the field of battle; and there, I am sure, it cannot be painful.”

“Not on the field of battle?” asked Lothair, inducing her to proceed.

“Well, I should think for all, on the field of battle, there must be a degree of excitement, and of sympathetic excitement, scarcely compatible with overwhelming suffering; but, if death were encountered there for a great cause, I should rather associate it with rapture than pain.”

“But still a good number of persons must die in their beds and be conscious,” said Lothair.

“It may be, though I should doubt it. The witnesses of such a demise are never impartial. All I have loved and lost have died upon the field of battle; and those who have suffered pain have been those whom they have left behind; and that pain,” she added with some emotion, “may perhaps deserve the description of Mr. Phæbus.”

Lothair would not pursue the subject, and there was rather an awkward pause. Theodora herself broke it, and in a lighter vein, though recurring to the same theme, she said with a slight smile: “I am scarcely a competent person to consult upon this subject, for, to be candid with you, I do not myself believe in death. There is a change, and doubtless a great one, painful it may be, certainly very perplexing, but I have a profound conviction of my immortality, and I do not believe that I shall rest in my grave in sæcula sæculorum, only to be convinced of it by the last trump.”

“I hope you will not leave this world before I do,” said Lothair; “but, if that sorrow be reserved for me, promise that to me, if only once, you will reappear.”

“I doubt whether the departed have that power,” said Theodora, “or else I think my heroes would have revisited me. I lost a father more magnificent than Jove, and two brothers brighter than Apollo, and all of them passionately loved me—and yet they have not come; but I shall see them—and perhaps soon. So you see, my dear lord,” speaking more briskly, and rising rather suddenly from her seat, “that for my part I think it best to arrange all that concerns one in this world while one inhabits it, and this reminds me that I have a little business to fulfil in which you can help me,” and she opened a cabinet and took out a flat antique case, and then said, resuming her seat at her table: “Some one, and anonymously, has made me a magnificent present; some strings of costly pearls. I am greatly embarrassed with them, for I never wear pearls or any thing else, and I never wish to accept presents. To return them to an unknown is out of my power, but it is not impossible that I may some day become acquainted with the donor. I wish them to be kept in safety, and therefore not by myself, for my life is subject to too great vicissitudes. I have therefore placed them in this case, which I shall now seal and intrust them to your care, as a friend in whom I have entire confidence. See,” she said, lighting a match, and opening the case, “here are the pearls—are they not superb?—and here is a note which will tell you what to do with them in case of my absence, when you open the case, which will not be for a year from this day. There, it is locked. I have directed it to you, and I will seal it with my father’s seal.”

Lothair was about to speak. “Do not say a word,” she said; “this seal is a religious ceremony with me.” She was some little time fulfilling it, so that the impression might be deep and clear. She looked at it earnestly while the wax was cooling, and then she said, “I deliver the custody of this to a friend whom I entirely trust. Adieu!” and she disappeared.

The amazed Lothair glanced at the seal. It was a single word, “ROMA,” and then, utterly mystified, he returned to town with his own present.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Mr. Phæbus had just finished a picture which he had painted for the Emperor of Russia. It was to depart immediately from England for its northern home, except that his imperial majesty had consented that it
should be exhibited for a brief space to the people of England. This was a condition which Mr. Phoebus had made in the interests of art, and as a due homage alike to his own patriotism and celebrity.

There was to be a private inspection of the picture at the studio of the artist, and Mr. Phoebus had invited Lothair to attend it. Our friend had accordingly, on the appointed day, driven down to Belmont and then walked to the residence of Mr. Phoebus with Colonel Campian and his wife. It was a short and pretty walk, entirely through the royal park, which the occupiers of Belmont had the traditional privilege thus to use.

The residence of Mr. Phoebus was convenient and agreeable, and in situation not unlike that of Belmont, being sylvan and sequestered. He had himself erected a sylvan studio, and added it to the original building. The flower-garden was bright and curious, and on the lawn was a tent of many colors, designed by himself, and which might have suited some splendid field of chivalry. Upon gilt and painted perches, also, there were parquettes and macaws.

Lothair on his arrival found many guests assembled, chiefly on the lawn. Mr. Phoebus was highly esteemed, and had distinguished and eminent friends, whose constant courtesies the present occasion allowed him elegantly to acknowledge. There was a polished and gray-headed noble who was the head of the patrons of art in England, whose nod of approbation sometimes made the fortune of a young artist, and whose purchase of pictures for the nation even the furious cognoscenti of the House of Commons dared not question. Some of the finest works of Mr. Phoebus were to be found in his gallery; but his lordship admired Madame Phoebus even more than her husband's works, and Euphrosyne as much as her sister. It was sometimes thought, among their friends, that this young lady had only to decide in order to share the widowed coronet; but Euphrosyne laughed at every thing, even her adorers; and, while her witching mockery only rendered them more fascinated, it often prevented critical declarations.

And Lady Beatrice was there, herself an artist, and full of æsthetic enthusiasm. Her hands were beautiful, and she passed her life in modelling them. And Cecrops was there, a rich old bachelor, with, it was supposed, the finest collection of modern pictures extant. His theory was, that a man could not do a wiser thing than invest the whole of his fortune in such securities, and it delighted him to tell his numerous nephews and nieces that he should, in all probability, leave his collection to the nation.

Clorinda, whose palace was always open to genius, and who delighted in the society of men who had discovered planets, excavated primeval mounds, painted pictures on new principles, or composed immortal poems which no human being could either scan or construe, but which she delighted in as "subtle" and full of secret melody, came leaning on the arms of a celebrated pleniptyrant, and beaming with sympathy on every subject, and with the consciousness of her universal charms.

And the accomplished Sir Francis was there, and several R. A's of eminence, for Phoebus was a true artist, and loved the brotherhood, and always placed them in the post of honor.

No language can describe the fascinating costume of Madame Phoebus and her glittering sister. "They are habiteds as sylvans," the great artist deigned to observe, if any of his guests could not refrain from admiring the dresses which he had himself devised. As for the venerable patron of art in Britain, he smiled when he met the lady of the house, and sighed when he glanced at Euphrosyne; but the first gave him a beautiful flower, and the other fastened it in his button-hole. He looked like a victim bedecked by the priestesses of some old wave of Hellenic loveliness, and proud of his impending fate. What could the Psalmist mean in the immortal passage? Threescore-and-ten, at the present day, is the period of romantic passions. As for our enamoured sexagenarians, they avenge the theories of our cold-hearted youth.

Mr. Phoebus was an eminent host. It delighted him to see people pleased, and
pleased under his influence. He had a belief, not without foundation, that every thing was done better under his roof than under that of any other person. The banquet in the air on the present occasion could only be done justice to by the courtly painters of the reign of Louis XV. Vanloo, and Watteau, and Lanerolle, would have caught the graceful groups, and the well-arranged colors, and the faces, some pretty, some a little affected; the ladies on fantastic chairs of wicker-work, gilt and curiously painted; the gentlemen reclining on the turf, or bending behind them with watchful care. The little tables all different, the soups in delicate cups of Sèvres, the wines in golden glass of Venice, the ortolans, the Italian confectionery, the endless bouquets, were worthy of the soft and invisible music that resounded from the pavilion, only varied by the coquetish scream of some macaw, jealous, amid all this novelty and excitement, of not being noticed.

"It is a scene of enchantment," whispered the chief patron of British art to Madame Phæbus.

"I always think luncheon in the air rather jolly," said Madame Phæbus.

"It is perfect romance!" murmured the chief patron of British art to Euphrosyne.

"With a due admixture of reality," she said, helping him to an enormous truffle, which she extracted from its napkin. "You know you must eat it with butter."

Lothair was glad to observe that, though in refined society, none were present with whom he had any previous acquaintance, for he had an instinctive feeling that if Hugo Bohun had been there, or Bertram, or the Duke of Brecon, or any ladies with whom he was familiarly acquainted, he would scarcely have been able to avail himself of the society of Theodora with the perfect freedom which he now enjoyed. They would all have been asking who she was, where she came from, how long Lothair had known her, all those questions, kind and neighborly, which under such circumstances occur. He was in a distinguished circle, but one different from that in which he lived. He sat next to Theodora, and Mr. Phæbus constantly hovered about them, ever doing something very graceful, or saying something very bright. Then he would whisper a word to the great Clorinda, who flashed intelligence from her celebrated eyes, and then he made a suggestion to the aesthetical Lady Beatrice, who immediately fell into enthusiasm and eloquence, and took the opportunity of displaying her celebrated hands.

The time had now arrived when they were to repair to the studio and view the picture. A curtain was over it, and then a silken robe across the chamber, and then some chairs. The subject of the picture was Hero and Leander, chosen by the heir of all the Russias himself, during a late visit to England.

"A fascinating subject," said old Cecrops to Mr. Phæbus, "but not a very original one."

"The originality of a subject is in its treatment," was the reply.

The theme, in the present instance, was certainly not conventionally treated. When the curtain was withdrawn, they beheld a figure of life-like size, exhibiting in undisguised completeness the perfection of the female form, and yet the painter had so skilfully availed himself of the shadowy and mystic hour, and of some gauze-like drapery, which veiled without concealing his design, that the chastest eye might gaze on his heroine with impunity. The splendor of her upstretched arms held high the beacon-light, which threw a glare upon the sublime anxiety of her countenance, while all the tumult of the Hellespont, the waves, the scudding sky, the opposite shore revealed by a blood-red flash, were touched by the hand of a master who had never failed.

The applause was a genuine verdict, and the company after a time began to disperse about the house and gardens. A small circle remained, and, passing the silken rope, approached and narrowly scrutinized the picture. Among these were Theodora and Lothair, the chief patron of British art, an R. A. or two, Clorinda, and Lady Beatrice.

Mr. Phæbus, who left the studio but had now returned, did not disturb them. After a while he approached the group. His air
was elate, and was redeemed only from arrogance by the intellect of his brow. The circle started a little as they heard his voice, for they had been unaware of his presence.

"To-morrow," he said, "the critics will commence. You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The lodge-gate of Belmont was opening as Lothair one morning approached it; a Hansom cab came forth, and in it was a person whose countenance was strongly marked on the memory of Lothair. It was that of his unknown friend at the Fenian meeting. Lothair instantly recognized and cordially saluted him, and his greeting, though hurriedly, was not ungraciously returned; but the vehicle did not stop. Lothair called to the driver to halt; but the driver, on the contrary, stimulated his steed, and in the winding lane was soon out of sight.

Theodora was not immediately visible. She was neither in her usual apartment nor in her garden; but it was only perhaps because Lothair was so full of his own impressions from his recent encounter at the lodge, that he did not observe that the demeanor of Mrs. Campian, when she appeared, was hardly marked by her habitual serenity. She entered the room hurriedly and spoke with quickness.

"Pray," exclaimed Lothair, rather eagerly, "do tell me the name of the gentleman who has just called here."

Theodora changed color, looked distressed, and was silent; unobserved, however, by Lothair, who, absorbed by his own highly-excited curiosity, proceeded to explain why he presumed to press for the information. "I am under great obligations to that person; I am not sure I may not say I owe him my life, but certainly an extrication from great danger and very embarrassing danger too. I never saw him but once, and he would not give me his name, and scarcely would accept my thanks. I wanted to stop his cab to-day, but it was impossible. He literally galloped off."

"He is a foreigner," said Mrs. Campian, who had recovered herself; "he was a particular friend of my dear father; and when he visits England, which he does occasionally, he calls to see us."

"Ah!" said Lothair, "I hope I shall soon have an opportunity of expressing to him my gratitude."

"It was so like him not to give his name and to shrink from thanks," said Mrs. Campian. "He never enters society, and makes no acquaintances."

"I am sorry for that," said Lothair, "for it is not only that he served me, but I was much taken with him, and felt that he was a person I should like to cultivate."

"Yes, Captain Bruges is a remarkable man," said Theodora; "he is not one to be forgotten."

"Captain Bruges. That, then, is his name?"

"He is known by the name of Captain Bruges," said Theodora, and she hesitated; and then speaking more quickly she added: "I cannot sanction, I cannot bear, any deception between you and this roof. Bruges is not his real name, nor is the title he assumes his real rank. He is not to be known, and not to be spoken of. He is one, and one of the most eminent, of the great family of sufferers in this world, but sufferers for a divine cause. I myself have been direly stricken in this struggle. When I remember the departed, it is not always easy to bear the thought. I keep it at the bottom of my heart; but this visit to-day has too terribly revived every thing. It is well that you only are here to witness my suffering, but you will not have to witness it again, for we will never again speak of these matters."

Lothair was much touched: his good heart and his good taste alike dissuaded him from attempting commonplace consolation. He ventured to take her hand and pressed it to his lips. "Dear lady!" he murmured, and he led her to a seat. "I fear my foolish tattle has added to pain which I would gladly bear for you."
They talked about nothings: about a new horse which Colonel Campian had just purchased, and which he wanted to show to Lothair; an old opera revived, but which sounded rather flat; something amusing that somebody had said, and something absurd which somebody had done. And then, when the ruffled feeling had been quite composed, and all had been brought back to the tenor of their usual pleasant life, Lothair said suddenly and rather gayly: “And now, dearest lady, I have a favor to ask. You know my majority is to be achieved and to be celebrated next month. I hope that yourself and Colonel Campian will honor me by being my guests.”

Theodora did not at all look like a lady who had received a social attention of the most distinguished class. She looked embarrassed, and began to murmur something about Colonel Campian, and their never going into society.

“Colonel Campian is going to Scotland, and you are going with him,” said Lothair. “I know it, for he told me so, and said he could manage the visit to me, if you approved it, quite well. In fact, it will fit in with this Scotch visit.”

“There was some talk once about Scotland,” said Theodora, “but that was a long time ago. Many things have happened since then. I do not think the Scotch visit is by any means so settled as you think.”

“But, however that may be decided,” said Lothair, “there can be no reason why you should not come to me.”

“It is presumptuous in me, a foreigner, to speak of such matters,” said Theodora; “but I fancy that, in such celebrations as you contemplate, there is, or there should be, some qualification of blood or family connection for becoming your guests. We should be there quite strangers, and in everybody’s way, checking the local and domestic abandon which I should suppose is one of the charms of such meetings.”

“I have few relations and scarcely a connection,” said Lothair, rather moodily. “I can only ask friends to celebrate my majority, and there are no friends whom I so much regard as those who live at Belmont.”

“It is very kind of you to say that, and to feel it; and I know that you would not say it if you did not feel it,” replied Theodora. “But still, I think it would be better that we should come to see you at a time when you are less engaged; perhaps you will take Colonel Campian down some day and give him some shooting.”

“All I can say is that, if you do not come, it will be the darkest, instead of the brightest, week in my life,” said Lothair. “In short, I feel I could not get through the business; I should be so mortified. I cannot restrain my feelings or arrange my countenance. Unless you come, the whole affair will be a complete failure, and worse than a failure.”

“Well, I will speak to Colonel Campian about it,” said Theodora, but with little animation.

“We will both speak to him about it now,” said Lothair, for the colonel at that moment entered the room and greeted Lothair, as was his custom, cordially.

“We are settling the visit to Muriel,” said Lothair; “I want to induce Mrs. Campian to come down a day or two before the rest, so that we may have the benefit of her counsel.”

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

Muriel Towers crowned a wooded steep, part of a wild, and winding, and sylvan valley, at the bottom of which rushed a foaming stream. On the other side of the castle the scene, though extensive, was not less striking, and was essentially romantic. A vast park spread in all directions beyond the limit of the eye, and with much variety of character—ornate near the mansion, and choicely timbered; in other parts glens and spreading dells, masses of black pines and savage woods; everywhere, sometimes glittering, and sometimes sullen, glimpses of the largest natural lake that inland England boasts, Muriel Mere, and in the extreme distance moors, and the first crest of mountains. The park, too, was full of life, for there were not only herds of red and fallow deer, but, in its more secret haunts, wan-
ordered a race of wild-cattle, extremely savage, white and dove-colored, and said to be of the time of the Romans.

It was not without emotion that Lothair beheld the chief seat of his race. It was not the first time he had visited it. He had a clear and painful recollection of a brief, hurried, unkind glimpse caught of it in his very earliest boyhood. His uncle had taken him there by some inconvenient cross-railroad, to avail themselves of which they had risen in the dark on a March morning, and in an east wind. When they arrived at their station they had hired an open fly drawn by a single horse, and, when they had thus at last reached the uninhabited Towers, they entered by the offices, where Lothair was placed in the steward's room, by a smoky fire, given something to eat, and told that he might walk about and amuse himself, provided he did not go out of sight of the castle, while his uncle and the steward mounted their horses and rode over the estate; leaving Lothair for hours without companions, and returning just in time, in a shivering twilight, to clutch him up, as it were, by the nape of the neck, twist him back again into the one-horse fly, and regain the railroad; his uncle praising himself the whole time for the satisfactory and business-like manner in which he had planned and completed the expedition.

What a contrast to present circumstances! Although Lothair had wished, and thought he had secured, that his arrival at Muriel should be quite private, and even unknown, and that all ceremonies and celebrations should be postponed for a few days, during which he hoped to become a little more familiar with his home, the secret could not be kept, and the county would not tolerate this reserve. He was met at the station by five hundred horsemen, all well mounted, and some of them gentlemen of high degree, who insisted upon accompanying him to his gates. His carriage passed under triumphal arches, and choirs of enthusiastic children, waving parochial banners, hymned his auspicious approach.

At the park gates his cavalcade quitted him with that delicacy of feeling which always distinguishes Englishmen, however rough their habit. As their attendance was self-invited, they would not intrude upon his home.

"Your lordship will have enough to do to-day, without being troubled with us," said their leader, as he shook hands with Lothair.

But Lothair would not part with them thus. With the inspiring recollection of his speech at the Fenian meeting, Lothair was not afraid of rising in his barouche and addressing them. What he said was said very well, and it was addressed to a people who, though the shyest in the world, have a passion for public speaking, than which no achievement more tests reserve. It was something to be a great peer and a great proprietor, and to be young and singularly well-favored; but to be able to make a speech, and such a good one, such cordial words in so strong and musical a voice—all felt at once they were in the presence of the natural leader of the county. The enthusiasm of the hunting-field burst forth. They gave him three ringing cheers, and jostled their horses forward, that they might grasp his hand.

The park gates were open, and the positions dashed along through scenes of loveliness on which Lothair would fain have lingered, but he consoled himself with the recollection that he should probably have an opportunity of seeing them again. Sometimes his carriage seemed in the heart of an ancient forest; sometimes the deer, startled at his approach, were scudding over expanding lawns; then his course wound by the margin of a sinuous lake with green islands and golden gondolas; and then, after advancing through stately avenues, he arrived at mighty gates of wondrous workmanship, that once had been the boast of a celebrated convent on the Danube, but which, in the days of revolutions, had reached England, and had been obtained by the grandfather of Lothair to guard the choice demesne that was the vicinage of his castle.

When we remember that Lothair, notwithstanding his rank and vast wealth, had never, from the nature of things, been the
master of an establishment, it must be admitted that the present occasion was a little trying for his nerves. The whole household of the Towers were arrayed and arranged in groups on the steps of the chief entrance. The steward of the estate, who had been one of the cavalade, had galloped on before, and he was, of course, the leading spirit, and extended his arm to his lord as Lothair descended from his carriage. The house-steward, the chief butler, the head-gardener, the chief of the kitchen, the head-keeper, the head-forester, and grooms of the stud and of the chambers, formed one group behind the housekeeper, a grave and distinguished-looking female, who courted like the old court; half a dozen powdered gentlemen, glowing in crimson livery, indicated the presence of my lord's footmen; while the rest of the household, considerable in numbers, were arranged in two groups, according to their sex, and at a respectful distance.

What struck Lothair—who was always thinking, and who had no inconsiderable fund of humor in his sweet and innocent nature—was the wonderful circumstance that, after so long an interval of neglect and abeyance, he should find himself the master of so complete and consummate a household.

"Castles and parks," he thought, "I had a right to count on, and, perhaps, even pictures, but how I came to possess such a work of art as my groom of the chambers, who seems as respectfully haughty, and as calmly graceful, as if he were at Brentham itself, and whose coat must have been made in Saville Row, quite bewilders me."

But Lothair, though he appreciated Putney Giles, had not yet formed a full conception of the resource and all-accomplished providence of that wondrous man, acting under the inspiration of the consummate Apollonia.

Passing through the entrance-hall, a lofty chamber, though otherwise of moderate dimensions, Lothair was ushered into his armory, a gallery two hundred feet long, with suits of complete mail ranged on each side, and the walls otherwise covered with rare and curious weapons. It was impossible, even for the master of this collection, to suppress the delight and the surprise with which he beheld the scene. We must remember, in his excuse, that he beheld it for the first time.

The armory led to a large and lofty octagonal chamber, highly decorated, in the centre of which was the tomb of Lothair's grandfather. He had raised it in his lifetime. The tomb was of alabaster surrounded by a railing of pure gold, and crowned with a recumbent figure of the deceased in his coronet—a fanciful man, who lived in solitude, building castles and making gardens.

What charmed Lothair most as he proceeded were the number of courts and quadrangles in the castle, all of bright and fantastic architecture, and each of which was a garden, glowing with brilliant colors, and gay with the voice of fountains or the forms of gorgeous birds. Our young friend did not soon weary in his progress; even the suggestions of the steward, that his lordship's luncheon was at command, did not restrain him. Ballrooms, and baronial halls, and long libraries with curiously-stained windows, and suites of dazzling saloons, where he beheld the original portraits of his parents, of which he had miniatures—he saw them all, and was pleased, and interested. But what most struck and even astonished him was the habitable air which pervaded the whole of this enormous structure; too rare even when families habitually reside in such dwellings; but almost inconceivable, when it was to be remembered that more than a generation had passed without a human being living in these splendid chambers, scarcely a human word being spoken in them.

There was not a refinement of modern furniture that was wanting; even the tables were covered with the choicest publications of the day.

"Mr. Putney Giles proposes to arrive here to-morrow," said the steward. "He thought your lordship would like to be a day or two alone."

"He is the most sensible man I know," said Lothair; "he always does the right thing. I think I will have my luncheon now, Mr. Harvey, and I will go over the cellars to-morrow."
CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Yes; Lothair wished to be alone. He had naturally a love of solitude, but the events of the last few hours lent an additional inducement to meditation. He was impressed, in a manner and degree not before experienced, with the greatness of his inheritance. His worldly position, until to-day, had been an abstraction. After all, he had only been one of a crowd, which he resembled. But the sight of this proud and abounding territory, and the unexpected encounter with his neighbors, brought to him a sense of power and of responsibility. He shrank from neither. The world seemed opening to him with all its delights, and with him duty was one. He was also sensible of the beautiful, and the surrounding forms of nature and art charmed him. Let us not forget that extreme youth and perfect health were ingredients not wanting in the spell any more than power or wealth. Was it, then, complete? Not without the influence of woman.

To that gentle yet mystical sway the spirit of Lothair had yielded. What was the precise character of his feelings to Theodora—what were his hopes, or views—he had hitherto had neither the time nor the inclination to make certain. The present was so delightful, and the enjoyment of her society had been so constant and complete, that he had ever driven the future from his consideration. Had the conduct of Theodora been different, had she deigned to practise on his affections, appealed to his sensibility, stimulated or piqued his vanity, it might have been otherwise. In the distraction of his heart, or the disturbance of his temper, he might have arrived at conclusions, and even expressed them, incompatible with the exquisite and even sublime friendship, which had so strangely and beautifully arisen, like a palace in a dream, and absorbed his being. Although their acquaintance could hardly be numbered by months, there was no living person of whom he had seen so much, or to whom he had opened his heart and mind with such profuse ingenuousness. Nor on her part, though apparently shrinking from egotism, had there ever been any intellectual reserve. On the contrary, although never authoritative, and, even when touching on her convictions, suggesting rather than dictating them, Lothair could not but feel that, during the happy period he had passed in her society, not only his taste had refined but his mind had considerably opened; his views had become larger, his sympathies had expanded; he considered with charity things and even persons from whom a year ago he would have recoiled with alarm or aversion.

The time during which Theodora had been his companion was the happiest period of his life. It was more than that; he could conceive no felicity greater, and all that he desired was that it should endure. Since they first met, scarcely four-and-twenty hours had passed without his being in her presence; and now, notwithstanding the novelty and the variety of the objects around him, and the vast, and urgent, and personal interest which they involved, he felt a want which meeting her, or the daily prospect of meeting her, could alone supply. Her voice lingered in his ear; he gazed upon a countenance invisible to others; and he scarcely saw or did any thing without almost unconsciously associating with it her opinion or approbation.

Well, then, the spell was complete. The fitfulness or melancholy which so often is the doom of youth, however otherwise favored, who do not love, was not the condition, capricious or desponding, of Lothair. In him combined all the accidents and feelings which enchant existence.

He had been rambling in the solitudes of his park, and had thrown himself on the green shadow of a stately tree, his cheek resting on his arm, and lost in reverie amid the deep and sultry silence. Wealthy and young, noble and full of noble thoughts, with the inspiration of health, surrounded by the beautiful, and his heart softened by feelings as exquisite, Lothair, nevertheless, could not refrain from pondering over the mystery of that life which seemed destined to bring to him only delight.

"Life would be perfect," he at length exclaimed, "if it would only last." But it will not last; and what then? He could not reconcile interest in this life with the
First Cause which they can neither explain nor deny. But man requires that there shall be direct relations between the created and the Creator; and that in those relations he should find a solution of the perplexities of existence. The brain that teems with illimitable thought, will never recognize as his creator any power of Nature, however irresistible, that is not gifted with consciousness. Atheism may be consistent with fine taste, and fine taste under certain conditions may for a time regulate a polished society; but ethics with atheism are impossible; and without ethics no human order can be strong or permanent.

The Church comes forward, and, without equivocation, offers to establish direct relations between God and man. Philosophy denies its title, and disputes its power. Why? Because they are founded on the supernatural. What is the supernatural? Can there be any thing more miraculous than the existence of man and the world?—any thing more literally supernatural than the origin of things? The Church explains what no one else pretends to explain, and which, every one agrees, it is of first moment should be made clear.

The clouds of a summer eve were glowing in the creative and flickering blaze of the vanished sun, that had passed like a monarch from the admiring sight, yet left his pomp behind. The golden and amber vapors fell into forms that to the eye of the musing Lothair depicted the objects of his frequent meditation. There seemed to rise in the horizon the dome and campaniles and lofty aisles of some celestial fame, such as he had often more than dreamed of raising to the revealed author of life and death. Altars arose and sacred shrines, and delicate chantries and fretted spires; now the flashing phantom of heavenly choirs, and then the dim response of cowled and earthly cenobites:

"These are black Vesper's pageants!"

CHAPTER XXXIX

Lothair, was quite glad to see Mr. Putney Giles. That gentleman indeed was a universal favorite. He was intelligent, ac-
quainted with every thing except theology and metaphysics, liked to oblige, a little to patronize, never made difficulties, and always overcame them. His bright blue eye, open forehead, and sunny face, indicated a man full of resources, and with a temper of natural sweetness.

The lawyer and his noble client had a great deal of business to transact. Lothair was to know his position in detail preparatory to releasing his guardians from their responsibilities, and assuming the management of his own affairs. Mr. Putney Giles was a first-rate man of business. With all his pleasant, easy manner, he was precise and methodical, and was not content that his client should be less master of his own affairs than his lawyer. The mornings passed over a table covered with dispatch-boxes and piles of ticketed and banded papers, and then they looked after the workmen who were preparing for the impending festivals, or rode over the estate.

"That is our weak point," said Mr. Putney Giles, pointing to a distant part of the valley. "We ought to have both sides of the valley. Your lordship will have to consider whether you can devote the two hundred thousand pounds of the second and extinct trust to a better purpose than in obtaining that estate."

Lothair had always destined that particular sum for the cathedral, the raising of which was to have been the first achievement of his majority; but he did not reply.

In a few days the guests began to arrive, but gradually. The duke and duchess and Lady Corisande came the first, and were one day alone with Lothair, for Mr. Putney Giles had departed to fetch Apollonia.

Lothair was unaffectedly gratified at not only receiving his friends at his own castle, but under these circumstances of intimacy. They had been the first persons who had been kind to him, and he really loved the whole family. They arrived rather late, but he would show them to their rooms—and they were choice ones—himself, and then they dined together in the small green dining-room. Nothing could be more graceful or more cordial than the whole affair. The duchess seemed to beam with affectionate pleasure as Lothair fulfilled his duties as their host; the duke praised the claret, and he seldom praised anything; while Lady Corisande only regretted that the impending twilight had prevented her from seeing the beautiful country, and expressed lively interest in the morrow's inspection of the castle and domain. Sometimes her eyes met those of Lothair, and she was so happy that she unconsciously smiled.

"And to-morrow," said Lothair, "I am delighted to say, we shall have to ourselves; at least all the morning. We will see the castle first, and then, after luncheon, we will drive about everywhere."

"Everywhere," said Corisande.

"It was very nice your asking us first, and alone," said the duchess.

"It was very nice in your coming, dear duchess," said Lothair, "and most kind—as you ever are to me."

"Duke of Brecon is coming to you on Thursday," said the duke; "he told me so at White's."

"Perhaps you would like to know, duchess, whom you are going to meet," said Lothair.

"I should much like to hear. Pray tell us."

"It is a rather formidable array," said Lothair, and he took out a paper. "First, there are all the notables of the county. I do not know any of them personally, so I wrote to each of them a letter, as well as sending them a formal invitation. I thought that was right."

"Quite right," said the duchess.

"Nothing could be more proper."

"Well, the first person, of course, is the lord-lieutenant. He is coming."

"By-the-by, let me see, who is your lord-lieutenant?" said the duke.

"Lord Agramont."

"To be sure. I was at college with him; a very good fellow; but I have never met him since, except once at Boodle's; and I never saw a man so red and gray, and I remember him such a good-looking fellow! He must have lived immensely in the country, and never thought of his person," said the duke in a tone of pity, and playing with his mustache.
"Is there a Lady Agramont?" inquired the duchess.

"Oh, yes! and she also honors me with her presence," said Lothair.

"And who was Lady Agramont?"

"Oh! his cousin," said the duke.

"The Agramonts always marry their cousins. His father did the same thing. They are so shy. It is a family that never was in society, and never will be. I was at Agramont Castle once when I was at college, and I never shall forget it. We used to sit down forty or fifty every day to dinner, entirely maiden aunts and clergymen, and that sort of thing. However, I shall be truly glad to see Agramont again, for, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, he is a thoroughly good fellow."

"Then there is the high-sheriff," continued Lothair; "and both the county members and their wives; and Mrs. High-Sheriff too. I believe there is some tremendous question respecting the precedence of this lady. There is no doubt that, in the county, the high-sheriff takes precedence of every one, even of the lord-lieutenant; but how about his wife? Perhaps your grace could aid me? Mr. Putney Giles said he would write about it to the Heralds' College."

"I should give her the benefit of any doubt," said the duchess.

"And then our bishop is coming," said Lothair.

"Oh! I am so glad you have asked the bishop," said Lady Corisande.

"There could be no doubt about it," said Lothair.

"I do not know how his lordship will get on with one of my guardians, the cardinal; but his eminence is not here in a priestly character; and, as for that, there is less chance of his differing with the cardinal than with my other guardian, Lord Culloden, who is a member of the Free Kirk."

"Is Lord Culloden coming?" said the duchess.

"Yes, and with two daughters, Flora and Grizell. I remember my cousins, good-natured little girls; but Mr. Putney Giles tells me that the shortest is six feet high."

"I think we shall have a very amusing party," said the duchess.

"You know all the others," said Lothair. "No, by-the-by, there is the dean of my college coming, and Monsignore Catesby, a great friend of the St. Jeromes."

Lady Corisande looked grave.

"The St. Jeromes will be here to-morrow," continued Lothair, "and the Montairys and the St. Aldegondes. I have half an idea that Bertram and Caribrooke and Hugo Bohn will be here to-night—Duke of Brecon on Thursday; and that, I think, is all, except an American lady and gentleman, whom, I think, you will like—great friends of mine; I knew them this year at Oxford, and they were very kind to me. He is a man of considerable fortune; they have lived at Paris a good deal."

"I have known Americans who lived at Paris," said the duke; "very good sort of people, and no end of money some of them."

"I believe Colonel Campian has large estates in the South," said Lothair; "but, though really I have no right to speak of his affairs, he must have suffered very much."

"Well, he has the consolation of suffering in a good cause," said the duke. "I shall be happy to make his acquaintance. I look upon an American gentleman with large estates in the South as a real aristocrat; and, whether he gets his rents, or whatever his returns may be, or not, I should always treat him with respect."

"I have heard the American women are very pretty," said Lady Corisande.

"Mrs. Campian is very distinguished," said Lothair; "but I think she was an Italian."

"They promise to be an interesting addition to our party," said the duchess, and she rose.

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CHAPTER XL

There never was any thing so successful as the arrangements of the next day. After breakfast they inspected the castle, and in the easiest manner, without form and with-
out hurry, resting occasionally in a gallery or a saloon, never examining a cabinet, and only looking at a picture now and then. Generally speaking, nothing is more fatiguing than the survey of a great house; but this enterprise was conducted with so much tact and consideration, and much which they had to see was so beautiful and novel, that every one was interested, and remained quite fresh for their subsequent exertions. “And then the duke is so much amused,” said the duchess to her daughter, delighted at the unusual excitement of the handsome, but somewhat too serene, partner of her life.

After luncheon they visited the gardens, which had been formed in a sylvan valley, enclosed with gilded gates. The creator of this paradise had been favored by Nature, and had availed himself of this opportunity. The contrast between the parterres, blazing with color, and the sylvan background, the undulating paths over romantic heights, the fountains and the fountains, the glittering statues, and the Babylonian terraces, formed a whole, much of which was beautiful, and all of which was striking and singular.

“Perhaps too many temples,” said Lothair; “but this ancestor of mine had some imagination.”

A carriage met them on the other side of the valley, and then they soon entered the park.

“I am almost as much a stranger here as yourself, dear duchess,” said Lothair; “but I have seen some parts which, I think, will please you.” And they commenced a drive of varying, but uneasing, beauty.

“I hope I shall see the wild-cattle,” said Lady Corisande.

Lady Corisande saw the wild-cattle, and many other things, which gratified and charmed her. It was a long drive, even of hours, and yet no one was, for a moment, wearied.

“What a delightful day!” Lady Corisande exclaimed, in her mother’s dressing-room. “I have never seen any place so beautiful.”

“I agree with you,” said the duchess; “but what pleases me most are his manners. They were always kind and natural; but they are so polished—so exactly what they ought to be; and he always says the right thing. I never knew anyone who had so matured.”

“Yes; it is very little more than a year since he came to us at Brentham,” said Lady Corisande, thoughtfully. “Certainly he has greatly changed. I remember he could hardly open his lips; and now I think him very agreeable.”

“He is more than that,” said the duchess; “he is interesting.”

“Yes,” said Lady Corisande; “he is interesting.”

“What delights me,” said the duchess, “is to see his enjoyment of his position. He seems to take such an interest in every thing. It makes me happy to see him so happy.”

“Well, I hardly know,” said Lady Corisande, “about that. There is something occasionally about his expression which I should hardly describe as indicative of happiness or content. It would be ungrateful to describe one as distrait, who seems to watch all one wants, and hangs on every word; and yet—especially as we returned, and when we were all of us a little silent—there was a remarkable abstraction about him; I caught it once or twice before, earlier in the day; his mind seemed in another place, and anxiously.”

“He has a great deal to think of,” said the duchess.

“I fear it is that dreadful Monsignore Catesby,” said Lady Corisande, with a sigh.

CHAPTER XLI.

The arrival of the guests was arranged with judgment. The personal friends came first; the formal visitors were invited only for the day before the public ceremonies commenced. No more dinners in small green dining-rooms. While the duchess was dressing, Bertha St. Aldegondé and Victoria Montairy, who had just arrived, came in to give her a rapid embrace while their own toilets were unpacking.
"Granville has come, mamma; I did not think that he would till the last moment. He said he was so afraid of being bored. There is a large party by this train; the St. Jeromes, Bertram, Mr. Bohun, Lord Carisbrooke, and some others we do not know."

The cardinal had been expected to-day, but he had telegraphed that his arrival must be postponed in consequence of business until the morrow, which day had been previously fixed for the arrival of his fellow-guardian and trustee, the Earl of Culloden, and his daughters, the Ladies Flora and Grizell Falkirk. Monsignore Catesby had, however, arrived by this train, and the persons "whom they did not know," the Campians.

Lothair waited on Colonel Campian immediately and welcomed him, but he did not see Theodora. Still he had inquired after her, and left her a message, and hoped that she would take some tea; and thus, as he flattered himself, broken a little the strangeness of their meeting under his roof; but, notwithstanding all this, when she really entered the drawing-room he was seized with such a palpitation of the heart that for a moment he thought he should be unequal to the situation. But the serenity of Theodora reassured him. The Campians came in late, and all eyes were upon them. Lothair presented Theodora to the duchess, who, being prepared for the occasion, said exactly the right thing in the best manner, and invited Mrs. Campian to sit by her, and then, Theodora being launched, Lothair whispered something to the duke, who nodded, and the colonel was introduced to his grace. The duke, always polite but generally cold, was more than courteous—he was cordial; he seemed to enjoy the opportunity of expressing his high consideration for a gentleman of the Southern States.

So the first step was over; Lothair recovered himself; the palpitation subsided; and the world still went on. The Campians had made a good start, and the favorable impression hourly increased. At dinner Theodora sat between Lord St. Jerome and Bertram, and talked more to the middle-aged peer than to the distinguished youth, who would willingly have engrossed her attention. All mothers admire such discretion, especially in a young and beautiful married woman, so the verdict of the evening among the great ladies was, that Theodora was distinguished, and that all she said or did was in good taste. On the plea of her being a foreigner, she was at once admitted into a certain degree of social intimacy. Had she had the misfortune of being native-born and had flirted with Bertram, she would probably, particularly with so much beauty, have been looked upon as "a horrid woman," and have been relegated for amusement, during her visit, to the attentions of the dark sex. But, strange to say, the social success of Colonel Campian was not less eminent than that of his distinguished wife. The character which the duke gave of him commanded universal sympathy.

"You know he is a gentleman," said the duke; "he is not a Yankee. People make the greatest mistakes about these things. He is a gentleman of the South; they have no property but land; and I am told his territory was immense. He always lived at Paris, and in the highest style—disgusted, of course, with his own country. It is not unlikely he may have lost his estates now; but that makes no difference to me. I shall treat him, and all Southern gentlemen, as our fathers treated the emigrant nobility of France."

"Hugo," said St. Aldegonde to Mr. Bohun, "I wish you would tell Bertha to come to me. I want her. She is talking to a lot of women at the other end of the room, and, if I go to her, I am afraid they will get hold of me."

The future duchess, who lived only to humor her lord, was at his side in an instant.

"You wanted me, Granville?"

"Yes; you know I was afraid, Bertha, I should be bored here. I am not bored. I like this American fellow. He understands the only two subjects which interest me; horses and tobacco."

"I am charmed, Granville, that you are not bored; I told mamma that you were very much afraid you would be."

"Yes; but I tell you what, Bertha, I cannot stand any of the ceremonies. I shall go before they begin. Why cannot Lothair
be content with receiving his friends in a quiet way? It is all humbug about the county. If he wants to do something for the county, he can build a wing to the infirmary, or something of that sort, and not bore us with speeches and fireworks. It is a sort of thing I cannot stand."

"And you shall not, dear Granville. The moment you are bored, you shall go. Only you are not bored at present."

"Not at present; but I expected to be."

"Yes; so I told mamma; but that makes the present more delightful."

The St. Jeromes were going to Italy and immediately. Their departure had only been postponed in order that they might be present at the majority of Lothair. Miss Arundel had at length succeeded in her great object. They were to pass the winter at Rome. Lord St. Jerome was quite pleased at having made the acquaintance at dinner of a Roman lady, who spoke English so perfectly; and Lady St. Jerome, who in consequence fastened upon Theodora, was getting into ecstasies, which would have been embarrassing had not her new acquaintance skilfully checked her.

"We must be satisfied that we both admire Rome," said Mrs. Campian, "though we admire it for different reasons. Although a Roman, I am not a Roman Catholic; and Colonel Campian’s views on Italian affairs generally would, I fear, not entirely agree with Lord St. Jerome’s."

"Naturally," said Lady St. Jerome, gracefully dropping the subject, and remembering that Colonel Campian was a citizen of the United States, which accounted in her apprehension for his peculiar opinions.

Lothair, who had been watching his opportunity the whole evening, approached Theodora. He meant to have expressed his hope that she was not wearied by her journey, but instead of that he said, "Your presence here makes me inexpressibly happy."

"I think everybody seems happy to be your guest," she replied, parrying, as was her custom, with a slight kind smile, and a low, sweet, unembarrassed voice, any personal allusion from Lothair of unusual energy or ardor.

"I wanted to meet you at the station to-day," he continued, "but there were so many people coming, that—" and he hesitated.

"It would really have been more embarrassing to us than to yourself," she said. "Nothing could be better than all the arrangements."

"I sent my own brougham to you," said Lothair. "I hope there was no mistake about it."

"None: your servant gave us your kind message; and as for the carriage, it was too delightful. Colonel Campian was so pleased with it, that he has promised to give me one, with your permission, exactly the same."

"I wish you would accept the one you used to-day."

"You are too magnificent; you really must try to forget, with us, that you are the lord of Muriel Towers. But I will willingly use your carriages as much as you please, for I caught glimpses of beauty to-day in our progress from the station that made me anxious to explore your delightful domain."

There was a slight burst of merriment from a distant part of the room, and everybody looked around. Colonel Campian had been telling a story to a group formed of the duke, St. Aldegonde, and Mr. Bohun.

"Best story I ever heard in my life," exclaimed St. Aldegonde, who prided himself, when he did laugh, which was rare, on laughing loud. But even the duke tittered, and Hugo Bohun smiled.

"I am glad to see the colonel get on so well with every one," said Lothair; "I was afraid he might have been bored."

"He does not know what that means," said Theodora; "and he is so natural and so sweet-tempered, and so intelligent, that it seems to me he always is popular."

"Do you think that will be a match?" said Monsignore Catesby to Miss Arundel.

"Well, I rather believe in the Duke of Brecon," she replied. They were referring to Lord Carisbrooke, who appeared to be devoted to Lady Corisande. "Do you admire the American lady?"

"Who is an Italian, they tell me, though she does not look like one. What do you think of her?" said the monsignore, evading, as was his custom, a direct reply.
"Well, I think she is very distinguished; unusual. I wonder where our host became acquainted with them? Do you know?"

"Not yet: but I dare say Mr. Bohun can tell us;" and he addressed that gentleman accordingly as he was passing by.

"Not the most remote idea," said Mr. Bohun. "You know the colonel is not a Yankee; he is a tremendous swell. The duke says, with more land than he has."

"He seems an agreeable person," said Miss Arundel.

"Well, he tell anecdotes; he has just been telling one; Granville likes anecdotes; they amuse him, and he likes to be amused; that is all he cares about. I hate anecdotes, and I always get away when conversation falls into, what Pinto calls, its anecdotage."

"You do not like to be amused?"

"Not too much; I like to be interested."

"Well," said Miss Arundel, "so long as a person can talk agreeably, I am satisfied. I think to talk well a rare gift; quite as rare as singing; and yet you expect every one to be able to talk, and very few to be able to sing."

"There are amusing people who do not interest," said the monsignore, "and interesting people who do not amuse. What I like is an agreeable person."

"My idea of an agreeable person," said Hugo Bohun, "is a person who agrees with me."

"Talking of singing, something is going to happen," said Miss Arundel.

A note was heard; a celebrated professor had entered the room and was seated at the piano, which he had just touched. There was a general and unconscious hush, and the countenance of Lord St. Aldegonde wore a rueful expression. But affairs turned out better than could be anticipated. A young and pretty girl, dressed in white, with a gigantic easl of dazzling beauty, played upon the violin with a grace, and sentiment, and marvellous skill, and passionate expression, worthy of St. Cecilia. She was a Hungarian lady, and this was her English début. Everybody praised her, and every body was pleased; and Lord St. Aldegonde, instead of being bored, took a wondrous rose out of his button-hole and presented it to her.

The performance only lasted half an hour, and then the ladies began to think of their bowers. Lady St. Aldegonde, before she quitted the room, was in earnest conversation with her lord.

"I have arranged all that you wished, Granville," she said, speaking rapidly and holding a candlestick. "We are to see the castle to-morrow, and the gardens and the parks and every thing else, but you are not to be bored at all, and not to lose your shooting. The moors are sixteen miles off, but our host says, with an omnibus and a good team—and he will give you a first-rate one—you can do it in an hour and ten minutes, certainly an hour and a quarter; and you are to make your own party in the smoking-room to-night, and take a capital luncheon with you."

"All right: I shall ask the Yankee; and I should like to take that Hungarian girl too, if she would only fiddle to us at luncheon."

CHAPTER XLII.

Next day the cardinal, with his secretary and his chaplain, arrived. Monsignore Catesby received his eminence at the station and knelt and kissed his hand as he stepped from the carriage. The monsignore had wonderfully manoeuvred that the whole of the household should have been marshalled to receive this prince of the Church, and perhaps have performed the same ceremony: no religious recognition, he assured them, in the least degree involved, only an act of not unusual respect to a foreign prince; but considering that the bishop of the diocese and his suite were that day expected, to say nothing of the Presbyterian guardian, probably arriving by the same train, Lothair would not be persuaded to sanction any ceremony whatever. Lady St. Jerome and Miss Arundel, however, did their best to compensate for this omission with reverences which a posture-master might have envied, and certainly would not have sur-
passed. They seemed to sink into the earth, and then slowly and supernaturally to emerge. The bishop had been at college with the cardinal and intimate with him, though they now met for the first time since his secession—a not uninteresting recounter. The bishop was high-church, and would not himself have made a bad cardinal, being polished and plausible, well-lettered, yet quite a man of the world. He was fond of society, and justified his taste in this respect by the flattering belief that by his presence he was extending the power of the Church; certainly favoring an ambition which could not be described as being moderate. The bishop had no abstract prejudice against gentlemen who wore red hats, and under ordinary circumstances would have welcomed his brother churchman with unaffected cordiality, not to say sympathy; but in the present instance, however gracious his mien and honeyed his expressions, he only looked upon the cardinal as a dangerous rival, intent upon clutching from his fold the most precious of his flock, and he had long looked to this occasion as the one which might decide the spiritual welfare and career of Lothair. The odds were not to be despised. There were two monsignores in the room besides the cardinal, but the bishop was a man of contrivance and resolution, not easily disheartened or defeated. Nor was he without allies. He did not count much on the university don, who was to arrive on the morrow in the shape of the head of an Oxford house, though he was a don of magnitude. This eminent personage had already let Lothair slip from his influence. But the bishop had a subtle counsellor in his chaplain, who wore as good a cassock as any monsignore, and he brought with him also a trusty archdeacon in a purple coat, whose countenance was quite entitled to a place in the Acta Sanctorum.

It was amusing to observe the elaborate courtesy and more than Christian kindness which the rival prelates and their official followers extended to each other. But under all this unction on both sides were unceasing observation, and a vigilance that never flagged; and on both sides there was an uneasy but irresistible conviction that they were on the eve of one of the decisive battles of the social world. Lord Culloden also at length appeared with his daughters, Ladies Flora and Grizell. They were quite as tall as Mr. Putney Giles had reported, but very pretty, with radiant complexions, sunny blue eyes, and flaxen locks. Their dimples and white shoulders and small feet and hands were much admired. Mr. Giles also returned with Apollonia, and, at length, also appeared the rival of Lord Carisbrooke, his grace of Breeon.

Lothair had passed a happy morning, for he had contrived, without difficulty, to be the companion of Theodora during the greater part of it. As the duchess and Lady Corisande had already inspected the castle, they disappeared after breakfast to write letters; and, when the after-luncheon expedition took place, Lothair allotted them to the care of Lord Carisbrooke, and himself became the companion of Lady St. Jerome and Theodora.

Notwithstanding all his efforts in the smoking-room, St. Aldegonde had only been able to induce Colonel Campian to be his companion in the shooting expedition, and the colonel fell into the lure only through his carelessness and good-nature. He much doubted the discretion of his decision as he listened to Lord St. Aldegonde's reasons for the expedition, in their rapid journey to the moors.

"I do not suppose," he said, "we shall have any good sport; but when you are in Scotland, and come to me, as I hope you will, I will give you something you will like. But it is a great thing to get off seeing the Towers, and the gardens, and all that sort of thing. Nothing bores me so much as going over a man's house. Besides, we get rid of the women."

The meeting between the two guardians did not promise to be as pleasant as that between the bishop and the cardinal, but the crusty Lord Culloden was scarcely a match for the social dexterity of his eminence. The cardinal, crossing the room, with winning ceremony approached and addressed his colleague.

"We can have no more controversies,
my lord, for our reign is over;" and he extended a delicate hand, which the surprised peer touched with a huge finger.

"Yes; it all depends on himself now," replied Lord Cuddoden, with a grim smile; "and I hope he will not make a fool of himself."

"What have you got for us to-night?" inquired Lothair of Mr. Giles, as the gentlemen rose from the dining-table.

Mr. Giles said he would consult his wife, but Lothair observing he would himself undertake that office, when he entered the saloon, addressed Apollonia. Nothing could be more skilful than the manner in which Mrs. Giles, in this party, assumed precisely the position which equally became her and suited her own views; at the same time the somewhat humble friend, but the trusted counsellor, of the Towers, she disarmed envy and conciliated consideration. Never obtrusive, yet always prompt and prepared with unfailing resource, and gifted, apparently, with universal talents, she soon became the recognized medium by which every thing was suggested or arranged; and before eight-and-forty hours had passed she was described by duchesses and their daughters as that "dear Mrs. Giles."

"Monsieur Raphael and his sister came down in the train with us," said Mrs. Giles to Lothair; "the rest of the troupe will be here until to-morrow; but they told me they could give you a perfect parabole if your lordship would like it; and the Spanish conjuror is here; but I rather think, from what I gather, that the young ladies would like a dance."

"I do not much fancy acting the moment these great churchmen have arrived, and with cardinals and bishops I would rather not have dances the first night. I almost wish we had kept the Hungarian lady for this evening."

"Shall I send for her? She is ready."

"The repetition would be too soon, and would show a great poverty of resources," said Lothair, smiling; "what we want is some singing."

"Mardoni ought to have been here to-day," said Mrs. Giles; "but he never keeps his engagements."

"I think our amateur materials are rather rich," said Lothair.

"There is Mrs. Campian," said Apollonia, in a low voice; but Lothair shook his head.

"But, perhaps, if others set her the example," he added, after a pause; "Lady Corisande is first rate, and all her sisters sing; I will go and consult the duchess."

There was soon a stir in the room. Lady St. Aldegonde and her sisters approached the piano, at which was seated the eminent professor. A note was heard, and there was silence. The execution was exquisite; and, indeed, there are few things more dainty than the blended voices of three women. No one seemed to appreciate the performance more than Mrs. Campian, who, greatly attracted by what was taking place, turned a careless ear, even to the honeyed sentences of no less a personage than the lord-bishop.

After an interval Lady Corisande was handed to the piano by Lothair. She was in fine voice, and sang with wonderful effect. Mrs. Campian, who seemed much interested, softly rose, and stole to the outward circle of the group which had gathered round the instrument. When the sounds had ceased, amid the general applause her voice of admiration was heard. The duchess approached her, evidently prompted by the general wish, and expressed her hope that Mrs. Campian would now favor them. It was not becoming to refuse when others had contributed so freely to the general entertainment, but Theodora was anxious not to place herself in competition with those who had preceded her. Looking over a volume of music, she suggested to Lady Corisande a duet, in which the peculiarities of their two voices, which in character were quite different, one being a soprano and the other a contralto, might be displayed. And very seldom, in a private chamber, had any thing of so high a class been heard. Not a lip moved except those of the singers, so complete was the fascination, till the conclusion elicited a burst of irresistible applause.

"In imagination I am throwing endless bouquets," said Hugo Bohun.

"I wish we could induce her to give us a recitation from Alfieri," said Mrs. Putney.
Giles in a whisper to Lady St. Aldegonde. "I heard it once: it was the finest thing I ever listened to."

"But cannot we?" said Lady St. Aldegonde. Apollonia shook her head. "She is extremely reserved. I am quite surprised that she sang; but she could not well refuse after your ladyship and your sisters had been so kind."

"But if the Lord of the Towers asks her," suggested Lady St. Aldegonde. "No, no," said Mrs. Giles, "that would not do; nor would he. He knows she dislikes it. A word from Colonel Campian, and the thing would be settled; but it is rather absurd to invoke the authority of a husband for so light a matter."

"I should like so much to hear her," said Lady St. Aldegonde. "I think I will ask her myself. I will go and speak to mamma."

There was much whispering and consulting in the room, but unnoticed, as general conversation had now been resumed. The duchess sent for Lothair, and conferred with him; but Lothair seemed to shake his head. Then her grace rose and approached Colonel Campian, who was talking to Lord Culloden, and the duchess and Lady St. Aldegonde went to Mrs. Campian. Then, after a short time, Lady St. Aldegonde rose and fetched Lothair.

"Her grace tells me," said Theodora, "that Colonel Campian wishes me to give a recitation. I cannot believe that such a performance can ever be generally interesting, especially in a foreign language, and I confess that I would rather not exhibit. But I do not like to be churlish when all are so amiable and compliant, and her grace tells me that it cannot well be postponed, for this is the last quiet night we shall have. What I want is a screen, and I must be a moment alone, before I venture on these enterprises. I require it to create the ideal presence."

Lothair and Bertram arranged the screen, the duchess and Lady St. Aldegonde glided about, and tranquilly intimated what was going to occur, so that, without effort, there was in a moment complete silence and general expectation. Almost unnoticed Mrs. Campian had disappeared, whispering a word as she passed to the eminent conductor, who was still seated at the piano. The company had almost unconsciously grouped themselves in the form of a theatre, the gentlemen generally standing behind the ladies who were seated. There were some bars of solemn music, and then, to an audience not less nervous than herself, Theodora came forward as Electra in that beautiful appeal to Clytemnestra, where she veils her mother's guilt even while she intimates her more than terrible suspicion of its existence, and makes one last desperate appeal of pathetic duty in order to save her parent and her fated house:

"O amata madre,
Che fai? Non credo io, no, che ardente fiamma
Il cor ti avvampi."

The ineffable grace of her action, simple without redundancy, her exquisite elocution, her deep yet controlled passion, and the magic of a voice thrilling even in a whisper—this form of Phidias with the genius of Sophocles—entirely enraptured a fastidious audience. When she ceased, there was an outburst of profound and unaffected appreciation; and Lord St. Aldegonde, who had listened in a sort of ecstasy, rushed forward, with a countenance as serious as the theme, to offer his thanks and express his admiration.

And then they gathered round her—all these charming women and some of these admiring men—as she would have resumed her seat, and entreated her once more—only once more—to favor them. She caught the adoring glance of the lord of the Towers, and her eyes seemed to inquire what she should do. "There will be many strangers here to-morrow," said Lothair, "and next week all the world. This is a delight only for the initiated," and he entreated her to gratify them.

"It shall be Alfieri's ode to America, then," said Theodora, "if you please."

"She is a Roman, I believe," said Lady St. Jerome to his eminence, "but not, alas! a child of the Church. Indeed, I fear her views generally are advanced," and she shook her head.
“At present,” said the cardinal, “this roof and this visit may influence her. I should like to see such powers engaged in the cause of God.”

The cardinal was an entire believer in female influence, and a considerable believer in his influence over females; and he had good cause for his convictions. The catalogue of his proselytes was numerous and distinguished. He had not only converted a duchess and several countesses, but he had gathered into his fold a real Mary Magdalen. In the height of her beauty and her fame, the most distinguished member of the demi-monde had suddenly thrown up her golden whip and jingling reins, and cast herself at the feet of the cardinal. He had a right, therefore, to be confident; and, while his exquisite taste and consummate cultivation rendered it impossible that he should not have been deeply gratified by the performance of Theodora, he was really the whole time considering the best means by which such charms and powers could be enlisted in the cause of the Church.

After the ladies had retired, the gentlemen talked for a few minutes over the interesting occurrence of the evening.

“Do you know,” said the bishop to the duke and some surrounding auditors, “fine as was the Electra, I preferred the ode to the tragedy? There was a tumult of her brow, especially in the address to Liberty, that was sublime—quite a Menad look.”

“What do you think of it, Carry?” said St. Aldegonde to Lord Carisbrooke.

“Brecon says she puts him in mind of Ristori.”

“She is not in the least like Ristori, or any one else,” said St. Aldegonde. “I never heard, I never saw any one like her. I’ll tell you what—you must take care what you say about her in the smoking-room, for her husband will be there, and an excellent fellow too. We went together to the moors this morning, and he did not bore me in the least. Only, if I had known as much about his wife as I do now, I would have stayed at home, and passed my morning with the women.”

CHAPTER XLIII.

St. Aldegonde loved to preside over the mysteries of the smoking-room. There, enveloped in his Egyptian robe, occasionally blurring out some careless or headstrong paradox to provoke discussion among others, which would amuse himself, rioting in a Rabelaisian anecdote, and listening with critical delight to endless memoirs of horses and prima-donnas, St. Aldegonde was never bored. Sometimes, too, when he could get hold of an eminent traveller, or some individual distinguished for special knowledge, St. Aldegonde would draw him out with skill, himself displaying an acquaintance with the particular topic which often surprised his habitual companions, for St. Aldegonde professed never to read; but he had no ordinary abilities, and an original turn of mind and habit of life, which threw him in the way of unusual persons of all classes, from whom he imbibed or extracted a vast variety of queer, always amusing, and not altogether useless information.

“Lothair has only one weakness,” he said to Colonel Campian as the ladies disappeared; “he does not smoke. Carry, you will come?”

“Well, I do not think I shall to-night,” said Lord Carisbrooke. Lady Corisande, it appears, particularly disapproved of smoking.

“Hum!” said St. Aldegonde; “Duke of Brecon, I know, will come, and Hugo and Bertram. My brother Montairy would give his ears to come, but is afraid of his wife; and then there is the monsignore, a most capital fellow, who knows every thing.”

There were other gatherings, before the midnight bell struck at the Towers, which discussed important affairs, though they might not sit so late as the smoking-party. Lady St. Aldegonde had a reception in her room as well as her lord. There the silent observation of the evening found avenging expression in sparkling criticism; and the summer lightning, though it generally blazed with harmless brilliancy, occasionally assumed a more arrowy character. The gentlemen of the smoking-room have it not
all their own way quite as much as they think. If, indeed, a new school of Athens were to be pictured, the sages and the students might be represented in exquisite dressinggowns, with slippers rarer than the lost one of Cinderella, and brandishing beautiful brushes over tresses still more fair. Then is the time when characters are never more finely drawn, or difficult social questions more accurately solved; knowledge without reasoning and truth without logic—the triumph of intuition! But we must not profane the mysteries of Bona Dea.

The archdeacon and the chaplain had also been in council with the bishop in his dressing-room, who, while he dismissed them with his benison, repeated his apparently satisfactory assurance that something would happen "the first thing after breakfast."

Lothair did not smoke, but he did not sleep. He was absorbed by the thought of Theodora. He could not but be conscious, and so far he was pleased by the consciousness, that she was as fascinating to others as to himself. What then? Even with the splendid novelty of his majestic home, and all the excitement of such an incident in his life, and the immediate prospect of their again meeting, he had felt, and even acutely, their separation. Whether it were the admiration of her by others which proved his own just appreciation, or whether it were the unobtrusive display of exquisite accomplishments, which, with all their intimacy, she had never forced on his notice—whatever the cause, her hold upon his heart and life, powerful as it was before, had strengthened. Lothair could not conceive existence tolerable without her constant presence; and with her constant presence existence would be rapture. It had come to that. All his musings, all his profound investigation and high resolve, all his sublime speculations on God and man, and life, and immortality, and the origin of things, and religious truth, ended in an engrossing state of feeling, which could be denoted in that form and in no other.

What, then, was his future? It seemed dark and distressing. Her constant presence his only happiness; her constant presence impossible. He seemed on an abyss.

In eight-and-forty hours or so one of the chief provinces of England would be blazing with the celebration of his legal accession to his high estate. If any one in the queen's dominions had to be fixed upon as the most fortunate and happiest of her subjects, it might well be Lothair. If happiness depend on lofty station, his ancient and hereditary rank was of the highest; if, as there seems no doubt, the chief source of felicity in this country is wealth, his vast possessions and accumulated treasure could not easily be rivalled, while he had a matchless advantage over those who pass, or waste, their gray and withered lives in acquiring millions, in his consummate and healthy youth. He had bright abilities, and a brighter heart. And yet the unknown truth was, that this favored being, on the eve of this critical event, was pacing his chamber agitated and infinitely disquieted, and struggling with circumstances and feelings over which alike he seemed to have no control, and which seemed to have been evoked without the exercise of his own will, or that of any other person.

"I do not think I can blame myself," he said; "and I am sure I cannot blame her. And yet—"

He opened his window and looked upon the moonlit garden, which filled the fanciful quadrangle. The light of the fountain seemed to fascinate his eye, and the music of its fall soothed him into reverie. The distressful images that had gathered round his heart gradually vanished, and all that remained to him was the reality of his happiness. Her beauty and her grace, the sweet stillness of her searching intellect, and the refined pathos of her disposition, only occurred to him, and he dwelt on them with spell-bound joy.

The great clock of the Towers sounded two.

"Ah!" said Lothair, "I must try to sleep. I have got to see the bishop to-morrow morning. I wonder what he wants?"
CHAPTER XLIV.

The bishop was particularly playful on the morrow at breakfast. Though his face beamed with Christian kindness, there was a twinkle in his eye which seemed not entirely superior to mundane self-complacency, even to a sense of earthly merriment. His seraphic raillery elicited sympathetic applause from the ladies, especially from the daughters of the house of Brentham, who laughed occasionally, even before his angelic jokes were well launched. His lambent flashes sometimes even played over the cardinal, whose cerulean armor, nevertheless, remained always unseathed. Monsignore Chidioch, however, would once unnecessarily rush to the aid of his chief, was tumbled over by the bishop with relentless gayety, to the infinite delight of Lady Corisande, who only wished it had been that dreadful Monsignore Catesby. But, though less demonstrative, apparently not the least devout, of his lordship’s votaries, were the Lady Flora and the Lady Grizell. These young gentlewomen, though apparently gifted with appetites becoming their ample, but far from graceless, forms, contrived to satisfy all the wants of nature without taking their charmed vision for a moment off the prelate, or losing a word which escaped his consecrated lips. Sometimes even they ventured to smile, and then they looked at their father and sighed. It was evident, notwithstanding their appetites and their splendid complexions, which would have become the Aurora of Guido, that these young ladies had some secret sorrow which required a confidante. Their visit to Muriel Towers was their introduction to society, for the eldest had only just attained sweet seventeen. Young ladies under these circumstances always fall in love, but with their own sex. Lady Flora and Lady Grizell both fell in love with Lady Corisande, and before the morning had passed away she had become their friend and counsellor, and the object of their devoted adoration. It seems that their secret sorrow had its origin in that mysterious religious sentiment which agitates or affects every class and condition of man, and which creates or destroys states, though philosophers are daily assuring us “that there is nothing in it.” The daughters of the Earl of Culloden could not stand any longer the Free Kirk, of which their austeré parent was a fiery votary. It seems that they had been secretly converted to the Episcopal Church of Scotland by a governess, who pretended to be a daughter of the Covenant, but who was really a niece of the primus, and, as Lord Culloden acutely observed, when he ignominiously dismissed her, “a Jesuit in disguise.” From that moment there had been no peace in his house. His handsome and gigantic daughters, who had hitherto been all meekness, and who had obeyed him as they would a tyrant father of the feudal ages, were resolute, and would not compromise their souls. They humbly expressed their desire to enter a convent, or to become at least sisters of mercy. Lord Culloden raged and raved, and delivered himself of cynical taunts, but to no purpose. The principle that forms Free Kirks is a strong principle, and takes many forms, which the social Polyphemes, who have only one eye, cannot perceive. In his desperate confusion, he thought that change of scene might be a diversion when things were at the worst, and this was the reason that he had, contrary to his original intention, accepted the invitation of his ward.

Lady Corisande was exactly the guide the girls required. They sat on each side of her, each holding her hand, which they frequently pressed to their lips. As her form was slight, though of perfect grace and symmetry, the contrast between herself and her worshippers was rather startling; but her noble brow, full of thought and purpose, the firmness of her chiselled lip, and the rich fire of her glance, vindicated her post as the leading spirit.

They breakfasted in a room which opened on a gallery, and at the other end of the gallery was an apartment similar to the breakfast-room, which was the male morning-room, and where the world could find the newspapers, or join in half an hour’s talk over the intended arrangements of the day. When the breakfast-party broke up,
the bishop approached Lothair, and looked at him earnestly.

"I am at your lordship's service," said Lothair, and they quitted the breakfast-room together. Half-way down the gallery they met Monsignore Catesby, who had in his hand a number, just arrived, of a newspaper which was esteemed an Ultramontane organ. He bowed as he passed them, with an air of some exultation, and the bishop and himself exchanged significant smiles, which, however, meant different things. Quitting the gallery, Lothair led the way to his private apartments; and, opening the door, ushered in the bishop.

Now, what was contained in the Ultramontane organ which apparently occasioned so much satisfaction to Monsignore Catesby? A deftly drawn-up announcement of some important arrangements which had been deeply planned. The announcement would be repeated in all the daily papers, which were hourly expected. The world was informed that his eminence, Cardinal Grandison, now on a visit at Muriel Towers to his ward, Lothair, would celebrate high mass on the ensuing Sunday in the city which was the episcopal capital of the bishop's see, and afterward preach on the present state of the Church of Christ. As the bishop must be absent from his cathedral that day, and had promised to preach in the chapel at Muriel, there was something dexterous in thus turning his lordship's flank, and desolating his diocese when he was not present to guard it from the fiery dragon. It was also remarked that there would be an unusual gathering of the Catholic aristocracy for the occasion. The rate of lodgings in the city had risen in consequence. At the end of the paragraph it was distinctly contradicted that Lothair had entered the Catholic Church. Such a statement was declared to be "premature," as his guardian, the cardinal, would never sanction his taking such a step until he was the master of his own actions; the general impression left by the whole paragraph being, that the world was not to be astonished if the first step of Lothair, on accomplishing his majority, was to pursue the very course which was now daintily described as premature.

At luncheon the whole party were again assembled. The newspapers had arrived in the interval, and had been digested. Every one was aware of the popish plot, as Hugo Bohun called it. The bishop, however, looked serene, and, if not as elate as in the morning, calm and content. He sat by the duchess, and spoke to her in a low voice, and with seriousness. The monsignori watched every expression.

When the duchess rose, the bishop accompanied her into the recess of a window, and she said: "You may depend upon me; I cannot answer for the duke. It is not the early rising; he always rises early in the country, but he likes to read his letters before he dresses, and that sort of thing. I think you had better speak to Lady Corisande yourself."

What had taken place at the interview of the bishop with Lothair, and what had elicited from the duchess an assurance that the prelate might depend upon her, generally transpired, in consequence of some confidential communications, in the course of the afternoon. It appeared that the right reverend lord had impressed, and successfully, on Lothair, the paramount duty of commencing the day of his majority by assisting in an early celebration of the most sacred rite of the Church. This, in the estimation of the bishop, though he had not directly alluded to the subject in the interview, but had urged the act on higher grounds, would be a triumphant answer to the insidions and calamnious paragraphs which had circulated during the last six months, and an authentic testimony that Lothair was not going to quit the Church of his fathers.

This announcement, however, produced consternation in the opposite camp. It seemed to more than neutralize the anticipated effect of the programme, and the deftly-conceived paragraph. Monsignore Catesby went about whispering that he feared Lothair was going to overdo it; and considering what he had to go through on Monday, if it were only for considerations of health, an early celebration was inexpedient. He tried the duchess—about whom he was beginning to hover a good deal—as he fancied she was of an impressive dispo-
sition, and gave some promise of results; but here the ground had been too forcibly preoccupied: then he flew to Lady St. Aldegonde, but he had the mortification of learning, from her lips, that she herself contemplated being a communicant at the same time. Lady Corisande had been before him. All the energies of that young lady were put forth in order that Lothair should be countenanced on this solemn occasion. She conveyed to the bishop before dinner the results of her exertions.

"You may count on Alberta St. Aldegonde and Victoria Montairy, and, I think, Lord Montairy also, if she presses him, which she has promised to do. Bertram must kneel by his friend at such a time. I think Lord Carisbrooke may: Duke of Brecon, I can say nothing about at present."

"Lord St. Aldegonde?" said the bishop.

Lady Corisande shook her head.

There had been a conclave in the bishop's room before dinner, in which the interview of the morning was discussed.

"It was successful; scarcely satisfactory," said the bishop. "He is a very clever fellow, and knows a great deal. They have got hold of him, and he has all the arguments at his fingers' ends. When I came to the point, he began to demur; I saw what was passing through his mind, and I said at once: "Your views are high: so are mine: so are those of the Church. It is a sacrifice, undoubtedly, in a certain sense. No sound theologian would maintain the simplicity of the elements; but that does not involve the coarse interpretation of the dark ages."

"Good, good," said the archdeacon; "and what is it your lordship did not exactly like?"

"He fended too much; and he said more than once, and in a manner I did not like, that, whatever were his views as to the Church, he thought he could on the whole conscientiously partake of this rite as administered by the Church of England."

"Every thing depends on this celebration," said the chaplain; "after that his doubts and difficulties will dispel."

"We must do our best that he is well supported," said the archdeacon.

"No fear of that," said the bishop. "I have spoken to some of our friends. We may depend on the duchess and her daughters—all admirable women; and they will do what they can with others. It will be a busy day, but I have expressed my hope that the heads of the household may be able to attend. But the county notables arrive to-day, and I shall make it a point with them, especially the lord-lieutenant."

"It should be known," said the chaplain. "I will send a memorandum to the Guardian."

"And John Bull," said the bishop. The lord-lieutenant and Lady Agramont, and their daughter, Lady Ida Alice, arrived to-day; and the high-sheriff, a manufacturer, a great liberal who delighted in peers, but whose otherwise perfect felicity to-day was a little marred and lessened by the haunting and restless fear that Lothair was not duly aware that he took precedence of the lord-lieutenant. Then there were Sir Hamlet Clotworthy, the master of the hounds, and a capital man of business; and the Honorable Lady Clotworthy, a haughty dame who ruled her circle with tremendous airs and graces, but who was a little subdued in the empyrean of Muriel Towers. The other county member, Mr. Ardenne, was a refined gentleman, and loved the arts. He had an ancient pedigree, and knew everybody else's, which was not always pleasant. What he most prided himself on was being the hereditary owner of a real deer-park—the only one, he asserted, in the county. Other persons had parks which had deer in them, but that was quite a different thing. His wife was a pretty woman, and the inspiring genius of archaeological societies, who loved their annual luncheon in her Tudor Halls, and illustrated by their researches the deeds and dwellings of her husband's ancient race.

The clergy of the various parishes on the estate all dined at the Towers to-day, in order to pay their respects to their bishop. "Lothair's eccumenical council," said Hugo Bohun, as he entered the crowded room, and looked around him with an air of not ungraceful impertinence. Among the clergy was Mr. Smylie, the brother of Apollonia.

A few years ago, Mr. Putney Giles had
not unreasonably availed himself of the position which he so usefully and so honorably filled, to recommend this gentleman to the guardians of Lothair to fill a vacant benefice. The Reverend Dionysius Smylie had distinguished himself at Trinity College, Dublin, and had gained a Hebrew scholarship there; after that he had written a work on the Revelations, which clearly settled the long-controverted point whether Rome in the great apocalypse was signified by Babylon. The bishop shrugged his shoulders when he received Mr. Smylie's papers, the examining chaplain sighed, and the archdeacon groaned. But man is proverbially short-sighted. The doctrine of evolution affords no instances so striking as those of sacerdotal development. Placed under the favoring conditions of clime and soil, the real character of the Reverend Dionysius Smylie gradually, but powerfully, developed itself. Where he now ministered, he was attended by acolytes, and incensed by thurifers. The shoulders of a fellow-countryman were alone equal to the burden of the enormous cross which preceded him; while his ecclesiastical wardrobe furnished him with many colored garments, suited to every season of the year, and every festival of the Church.

At first there was indignation, and rumors or prophecies that we should soon have another case of perversion, and that Mr. Smylie was going over to Rome; but these superficial commentators misapprehended the vigorous vanity of the man. "Rome may come to me," said Mr. Smylie, "and it is perhaps the best thing it could do. This is the real Church without Roman error."

The bishop and his reverend staff, who were at first so much annoyed at the preference of Mr. Smylie, had now, with respect to him, only one duty, and that was to restrain his exuberant priestliness; but they fulfilled that duty in a kindly and charitable spirit; and, when the Reverend Dionysius Smylie was appointed chaplain to Lothair, the bishop did not shrug his shoulders, the chaplain did not sigh, nor the archdeacon groan.

The party was so considerable to-day that they dined in the great hall. When it was announced to Lothair that his lordship's dinner was served, and he offered his arm to his destined companion, he looked around, and then, in an audible voice, and with a stateliness becoming such an incident, called upon the high-sheriff to lead the duchess to the table. Although that eminent personage had been thinking of nothing else for days, and during the last half-hour had felt as a man feels, and can only feel, who knows that some public function is momentarily about to fall to his perilous discharge, he was taken quite aback, changed color, and lost his head. But the band of Lothair, who were waiting at the door of the apartment to precede the procession to the hall, striking up at this moment "The Roast Beef of Old England," reanimated his heart; and, following Lothair, and preceding all the other guests down the gallery, and through many chambers, he experienced the proudest moment of a life of struggle, ingenuity, vicissitude, and success.

CHAPTER XLV.

Under all this flowing festivity there was already a current of struggle and party passion. Serious thoughts and some anxiety occupied the minds of several of the guests, amid the variety of proffered dishes and sparkling wines, and the subdued strains of delicate music. This disquietude did not touch Lothair. He was happy to find himself in his ancestral hall, surrounded by many whom he respected, and by some whom he loved. He was an excellent host, which no one can be who does not combine a good heart with high breeding.

Theodora was rather far from him, but he could catch her grave, sweet countenance at an angle of the table, as she bowed her head to Mr. Ardenne, the county member, who was evidently initiating her in all the mysteries of deer-parks. The cardinal sat near him, winning over, though without apparent effort, the somewhat prejudiced Lady Agramont. His eminence could converse with more facility than others, for he dined off biscuits and drank only water.
Lord Culloden had taken out Lady St. Jerome, who expended on him all the resources of her impassioned tittle-tattle, extracting only grim smiles; and Lady Corisande had fallen to the happy lot of the Duke of Brecon; according to the fine perception of Clare Arundel—and women are very quick in these discoveries—the winning horse. St. Aldegonde had managed to tumble in between Lady Flora and Lady Grizell, and seemed immensely amused.

The duke inquired of Lothair how many he could dine in his hall.

"We must dine more than two hundred on Monday," he replied.

"And now, I should think, we have only a third of that number," said his grace. "It will be a tight fit."

"Mr. Putney Giles has had a drawing made, and every seat apportioned. We shall just do it."

"I fear you will have too busy a day on Monday," said the cardinal, who had caught up the conversation.

"Well, you know, sir, I do not sit up smoking with Lord St. Aldegonde."

After dinner, Lady Corisande seated herself by Mrs. Camplan. "You must have thought me very rude," she said, "to have left you so suddenly at tea, when the bishop looked into the room; but he wanted me on a matter of the greatest importance. I must, therefore, ask your pardon. You naturally would not feel on this matter as we all do, or most of us do," she added with some hesitation; "being—pardon me—a foreigner, and the question involving national as well as religious feelings;" and then, somewhat hurriedly, but with emotion, she detailed to Theodora all that had occurred respecting the early celebration on Monday, and the opposition it was receiving from the cardinal and his friends. It was a relief to Lady Corisande thus to express all her feelings on a subject on which she had been brooding the whole day.

"You mistake," said Theodora, quietly, when Lady Corisande had finished. "I am much interested in what you tell me. I should deplore our friend falling under the influence of the Romish priesthood."

"And yet there is danger of it," said Lady Corisande, "more than danger," she added in a low but earnest voice. "You do not know what a conspiracy is going on, and has been going on for months, to effect this end. I tremble."

"That is the last thing I ever do," said Theodora, with a faint, sweet smile. "I hope, but I never tremble."

"You have seen the announcement in the newspapers to-day?" said Lady Corisande.

"I think, if they were certain of their prey, they would be more reserved," said Theodora.

"There is something in that," said Lady Corisande, musingly. "You know not what a relief it is to me to speak to you on this matter. Mamma agrees with me, and so do my sisters; but still they may agree with me because they are my mamma and my sisters; but I look upon our nobility joining the Church of Rome as the greatest calamity that has ever happened to England. Irrespective of all religious considerations, on which I will not presume to touch, it is an abnegation of patriotism; and in this age, when all things are questioned, a love of our country seems to me the one sentiment to cling to."

"I know no higher sentiment," said Theodora in a low voice, and yet which sounded like the breathing of some divine shrine, and her Athenian eye met the fiery glance of Lady Corisande with an expression of noble sympathy.

"I am so glad that I spoke to you on this matter," said Lady Corisande, "for there is something in you which encourages me. As you say, if they were certain, they would be silent; and yet, from what I hear, their hopes are high. You know," she added in a whisper, "that he has absolutely engaged to raise a popish cathedral. My brother, Bertram, has seen the model in his rooms."

"I have known models that were never realized," said Theodora.

"Ah! you are hopeful; you said you were hopeful. It is a beautiful disposition. It is not mine," she added, with a sigh.

"It should be," said Theodora; "you were not born to sigh. Sighs should be for those who have no country, like myself;"
not for the daughters of England—the beautiful daughters of proud England."

"But you have your husband's country, and that is proud and great."

"I have only one country, and it is not my husband's; and I have only one thought, and it is to set it free."

"It is a noble one," said Lady Corisande, "as I am sure are all your thoughts. There are the gentlemen; I am sorry they have come. There," she added, as Monsignore Catesby entered the room, "there is his evil genius."

"But you have baffled him," said Theodora.

"Ah," said Lady Corisande, with a long-drawn sigh. "Their manœuvres never cease. However, I think Monday must be safe. Would you come?" she said, with a serious, searching glance, and in a kind of coaxing murmur.

"I should be an intruder, my dear lady," said Theodora, declining the suggestion; "but, so far as hoping that our friend will never join the Church of Rome, you will have ever my ardent wishes."

Theodora might have added her belief, for Lothair had never concealed from her a single thought or act of his life in this respect. She knew all, and had weighed every thing, and flattered herself that their frequent and unreserved conversations had not confirmed his belief in the infallibility of the Church of Rome, and perhaps of some other things.

It had been settled that there should be dancing this evening—all the young ladies had wished it. Lothair danced with Lady Flora Falkirk, and her sister, Lady Grizell, was in the same quadille. They moved about like young giraffes in an African forest, but looked bright and happy. Lothair liked his cousins; their inexperience and innocence, and the simplicity with which they exhibited and expressed their feelings, had in them something bewitching. Then the rough remembrance of his old life at Falkirk and its contrast with the present scene had in it something stimulating. They were his juniors by several years, but they were always gentle and kind to him; and sometimes it seemed he was the only person whom they, too, had found kind and gentle. He called his cousin, too, by her Christian name, and he was amused, standing by this beautiful giantess, and calling her Flora. There were other amusing circumstances in the quadrille; not the least, Lord St. Aldegonde dancing with Mrs. Campian. The wonder of Lady St. Aldegonde was only equalled by her delight.

The lord-lieutenant was standing by the duke, in a corner of the saloon, observing, not with dissatisfaction, his daughter, Lady Ida Alice, dancing with Lothair.

"Do you know this is the first time I ever had the honor of meeting a cardinal?" he said.

"And we never expected that it would happen to either of us in this country when we were at Christchurch together," replied the duke.

"Well, I hope every thing is for the best," said Lord Agramont. "We are to have all these gentlemen in our good city of Grandchester, to-morrow."

"So I understand."

"You read that paragraph in the newspapers? Do you think there is any thing in it?"

"About our friend? It would be a great misfortune."

"The bishop says there is nothing in it," said the lord-lieutenant.

"Well, he ought to know. I understand he has had some serious conversation recently with our friend?"

"Yes; he has spoken to me about it. Are you going to attend the early celebration to-morrow? It is not much to my taste; a little new-fangled, I think; but I shall go, as they say it will do good."

"I am glad of that; it is well that he should be impressed at this moment with the importance and opinion of his country."

"Do you know I never saw him before?" said the lord-lieutenant. "He is winning."

"I know no youth," said the duke, "I would not except my own son, and Bertram has never given me an uneasy moment, of whom I have a better opinion, both as to heart and head. I should deeply deplore his being smashed by a Jesuit."
The dancing had ceased for a moment; there was a stir; Lord Carisbrooke was enlarging, with unusual animation, to an interested group, about a new dance at Paris—the new dance. Could they not have it here? Unfortunately, he did not know its name, and could not describe its figure; but it was something new; quite new; they got it at Paris. Princess Metternich dances it. He danced it with her, and she taught it him; only he never could explain any thing, and indeed never did exactly make it out. "But you danced it with a shawl, and then two ladies hold the shawl, and the cavaliers pass under it. In fact, it is the only thing; it is the new dance at Paris."

What a pity that anything so delightful should be so indefinite and perplexing, and indeed impossible, which rendered it still more desirable! If Lord Carisbrooke only could have remembered its name, or a single step in its figure—it was so tantalizing!

"Do not you think so?" said Hugo Bohun to Mrs. Campian, who was sitting apart, listening to Lord St. Aldegonde's account of his travels in the United States, which he was very sorry he ever quitted. And then they inquired to what Mr. Bohun referred, and then he told them all that had been said.

"I know what he means," said Mrs. Campian. "It is not a French dance; it is a Moorish dance."

"That woman knows everything, Hugo," said Lord St. Aldegonde in a solemn whisper. And then he called to his wife. "Bertha, Mrs. Campian will tell you all about this dance that Carisbrooke is making such a mull of. Now, look here, Bertha; you must get the Campians to come to us as soon as possible. They are going to Scotland from this place, and there is no reason, if you manage it well, why they should not come on to us at once. Now, exert yourself."

"I will do all I can, Granville."

"It is not French, it is Moorish; it is called the Tangerine," said Theodora to her surrounding votaries. "You begin with a circle."

"But how are we to dance without the music?" said Lady Montairy.

"Ah! I wish I had known this," said Theodora, "before dinner, and I think I could have dotted down something that would have helped us. But let me see," and she went up to the eminent professor, with whom she was well acquainted, and said, "Signor Ricci, it begins so," and she hummed divinely a fantastic air, which, after a few moments' musing, he reproduced; "and then it goes off into what they call in Spain a saraband. Is there a shawl in the room?"

"My mother has always a shawl in reserve," said Bertram, "particularly when she pays visits to houses where there are galleries;" and he brought back a mantle of Cashmere.

"Now, Signor Ricci," said Mrs. Campian, and she again hummed an air, and moved forward at the same time with brilliant grace, waving at the end the shawl.

The expression of her countenance, looking round to Signor Ricci, as she was moving on to see whether he had caught her idea, fascinated Lothair.

"It is exactly what I told you," said Lord Carisbrooke, "and, I can assure you, it is the only dance now. I am very glad I remembered it."

"I see it all," said Signor Ricci, as Theodora rapidly detailed to him the rest of the figure. "And at any rate it will be the Tangerine with variations."

"Let me have the honor of being your partner in this great enterprise," said Lothair; "you are the inspiration of Muriel."

"Oh! I am very glad I can do anything, however slight, to please you and your friends. I like them all; but particularly Lady Corisande."

A new dance in a country-house is a festival of frolic grace. The incomplete knowledge, and the imperfect execution, are themselves causes of merry excitement, in their contrast with the unimpassioned routine and almost unconscious practice of traditional performances. And gay and frequent were the bursts of laughter from the bright and airy band who were proud to be the scholars of Theodora. The least successful among them was perhaps Lord Carisbrooke.

"Princess Metternich must have taught
you wrong, Carisbrooke," said Hugo Bohun.

They ended with a waltz, Lothair dancing with Miss Arundel. She accepted his offer to take some tea on its conclusion. While they were standing at the table, a little withdrawn from the others, and he holding a sugar-basin, she said in a low voice, looking on her cup and not at him, "the cardinal is vexed about the early celebration; he says it should have been at midnight."

"I am sorry he is vexed," said Lothair.

"He was going to speak to you himself," continued Miss Arundel; "but he felt a delicacy about it. He had thought that your common feelings respecting the Church might have induced you if not to consult, at least to converse, with him on the subject; I mean as your guardian."

"It might have been perhaps as well," said Lothair; "but I also feel a delicacy on these matters."

"There ought to be none on such matters," continued Miss Arundel, "when every thing is at stake."

"I do not see that I could have taken any other course than I have done," said Lothair. "It can hardly be wrong. The bishop's church views are sound."

"Sound!" said Miss Arundel; "moonshine instead of sunshine."

"Moonshine would rather suit a midnight than a morning celebration," said Lothair; "would it not?"

"A fair repartee, but we are dealing with a question that cannot be settled by jests. See," she said with great seriousness, putting down her cup and taking again his offered arm, "you think you are only complying with a form befitting your position and the occasion. You deceive yourself. You are hampering your future freedom by this step, and they know it. That is why it was planned. It was not necessary; nothing can be necessary so pregnant with evil. You might have made, you might yet make, a thousand excuses. It is a rite which hardly suits the levity of the hour, even with their feelings; but, with your view of its real character, it is sacrilege. What is occurring to-night might furnish you with scruples?" And she looked up in his face.

"I think you take an exaggerated view of what I contemplate," said Lothair. "Even with your convictions, it may be an imperfect rite; but it never can be an injurious one."

"There can be no compromise on such matters," said Miss Arundel. "The Church knows nothing of imperfect rites. They are all perfect, because they are all divine; any deviation from them is heresy, and fatal. My convictions on this subject are your convictions; act up to them."

"I am sure, if thinking of these matters would guide a man right—" said Lothair, with a sigh, and he stopped.

"Human thought will never guide you; and very justly, when you have for a guide Divine truth. You are now your own master; go at once to its fountain-head; go to Rome, and then all your perplexities will vanish, and forever."

"I do not see much prospect of my going to Rome," said Lothair, "at least at present."

"Well," said Miss Arundel, "in a few weeks I hope to be there; and if so, I hope never to quit it."

"Do not say that; the future is always unknown."

"Not yours," said Miss Arundel. "Whatever you think, you will go to Rome. Mark my words. I summon you to meet me at Rome."

CHAPTER XLVI.

There can be little doubt, generally speaking, that it is more satisfactory to pass Sunday in the country than in town. There is something in the essential stillness of country-life, which blends harmoniously with the ordinance of the most divine of our divine laws. It is pleasant, too, when the congregation breaks up, to greet one's neighbors; to say kind words to kind faces; to hear some rural news profitable to learn, which sometimes enables you to do some good, and sometimes prevents others from doing some harm. A quiet, domestic walk,
too, in the afternoon, has its pleasures; and, so numerous and so various are the sources of interest in the country, that, though it be Sunday, there is no reason why your walk should not have an object.

But Sunday in the country, with your house full of visitors, is too often an exception to this general truth. It is a trial. Your guests cannot always be at church, and, if they could, would not like it. There is nothing to interest or amuse them; no sport; no castles or factories to visit; no adventurous expeditions; no gay music in the morn, and no light dance in the evening. There is always danger of the day becoming a course of heavy meals and stupid walks, for the external scene and all its teeming circumstances, natural and human, though full of concern to you, are to your visitors an insipid blank.

How did Sunday go off at Muriel Towers?

In the first place, there was a special train, which, at an early hour, took the cardinal and his suite and the St. Jerome family to Grandchester, where they were awaited with profound expectation. But the Anglican portion of the guests were not without their share of ecclesiastical and spiritual excitement, for the bishop was to preach this day in the chapel of the Towers, a fine and capacious sanctuary of florid Gothic, and his lordship was a sacerdotal orator of repute.

It had been announced that the breakfast-hour was to be somewhat earlier. The ladies in general were punctual, and seemed conscious of some great event impending. The Ladies Flora and Grizell entered with, each in her hand, a prayer-book of purple velvet, adorned with a decided cross, the gift of the primus. Lord Culloden, at the request of Lady Corisande, had consented to their hearing the bishop, which he would not do himself. He passed his morning in finally examining the guardians' accounts, the investigation of which he conducted and concluded, during the rest of the day, with Mr. Putney Giles. Mrs. Campian did not leave her room. Lord St. Aldegonde came down late, and looked about him with an uneasy, ill-humored air.

Whether it were the absence of Theodora, or some other cause, he was brisk, ungracious, scowling, and silent, only nodding to the bishop, who benignly saluted him, refusing every dish that was offered; then getting up, and helping himself at the side-table, making a great noise with the carving-instruments, and flouncing down his plate when he resumed his seat. Nor was his costume correct. All the other gentlemen, though their usual morning-dresses were sufficiently fantastic—trunk-hose of every form, stockings bright as parquets, wondrous shirts, and velvet-coats of every tint—habited themselves to-day, both as regards form and color, in a style indicative of the subdued gravity of their feelings. Lord St. Aldegonde had on his shooting-jacket of brown velvet and a pink-shirt and no cravat, and his rich brown locks, always, to a certain degree, neglected, were peculiarly dishevelled.

Hugo Bohun, who was not afraid of him, and was a high-churchman, being, in religion, and in all other matters, always on the side of the duchesses, said: "Well, St. Aldegonde, are you going to chapel in that dress?" But St. Aldegonde would not answer; he gave a snort, and glanced at Hugo, with the eye of a gladiator.

The meal was over. The bishop was standing near the mantel-piece talking to the ladies, who were clustered round him; the archdeacon and the chaplain and some other clergy a little in the background; Lord St. Aldegonde, who, whether there were a fire or not, always stood with his back to the fireplace with his hands in his pockets, moved discourteously among them, assumed his usual position, and listened, as it were grimly, for a few moments to their talk; then he suddenly exclaimed in a loud voice, and with the groin of a rebellious Titan, "How I hate Sunday!"

"Granville!" exclaimed Lady St. Aldegonde, turning pale. There was a general shudder.

"I mean in a country-house," said Lord St. Aldegonde. "Of course, I mean in a country-house. I do not dislike it when alone, and I do not dislike it in London. But Sunday in a country-house is infernal."
“I think it is now time for us to go,” said the bishop, walking away with dignified reserve, and they all dispersed.

The service was choral and intoned; for, although the Rev. Dionysius Smylie had not yet had time or opportunity, as was his intention, to form and train a choir from the household of the Towers, he had secured from his neighboring parish and other sources external and effective aid in that respect. The parts of the service were skillfully distributed, and rarely were a greater number of priests enlisted in a more imposing manner. A good organ was well played; the singing, as usual, a little too noisy; there was an anthem and an introit—but no incense, which was forbidden by the bishop; and, though there were candles on the altar, they were not permitted to be lighted.

The sermon was most successful; the ladies returned with elate and animated faces, quite enthusiastic and almost forgetting in their satisfaction the terrible outrage of Lord St. Aldegonde. He himself had by this time repented of what he had done, and recovered his temper, and greeted his wife with a voice and look which indicated to her practised senses the favorable change.

“Bertha,” he said, “you know I did not mean any thing personal to the bishop in what I said. I do not like bishops; I think there is no use in them; but I have no objection to him personally; I think him an agreeable man; not at all a bore. Just put it right, Bertha. But I tell you what, Bertha, I cannot go to church here. Lord Culloden does not go, and he is a very religious man. He is the man I most agree with on these matters. I am a free churchman, and there is an end of it. I cannot go this afternoon. I do not approve of the whole thing. It is altogether against my conscience. What I mean to do, if I can manage it, is to take a real long walk with the Campians.”

Mrs. Campian appeared at luncheon. The bishop was attentive to her; even cordial. He was resolved she should not feel he was annoyed by her not having been a member of his congregation in the morning. Lady Corisande too had said to him: “I wish so much you would talk to Mrs. Campian; she is a sweet, noble creature, and so clever! I feel that she might be brought to view things in the right light.”

“I never know,” said the bishop, “how to deal with these American ladies. I never can make out what they believe, or what they disbelieve. It is a sort of confusion between Mrs. Beecher Stowe and the Fifth Avenue congregation—and Barnum,” he added with a twinkling eye.

The second service was late; the dean preached. The lateness of the hour permitted the lord-lieutenant and those guests who had arrived only the previous day to look over the castle, or ramble about the gardens. St. Aldegonde succeeded in his scheme of a real long walk with the Campians, which Lothair, bound to listen to the head of his college, was not permitted to share.

In the evening Signor Mardoni, who had arrived, and Madame Isola Bella, favored them with what they called sacred music; principally prayers from operas and a grand Stabat Mater.

Lord Culloden invited Lothair into a farther saloon, where they might speak without disturbing the performers or the audience.

“I’ll just take advantage, my dear boy,” said Lord Culloden, in a tone of unusual tenderness, and of Doric accent, “of the absence of these gentlemen to have a little quiet conversation with you. Though I have not seen so much of you of late as in old days, I take a great interest in you, no doubt of that, and I was very pleased to see how good-natured you were to the girls. You have romped with them when they were little ones. Now, in a few hours, you will be master of a great inheritance, and I hope it will profit ye. I have been over the accounts with Mr. Giles, and I was pleased to hear that you had made yourself properly acquainted with them in detail. Never you sign any paper without reading it first, and knowing well what it means. You will have to sign a release to us if you be satisfied, and that you may easily be. My poor brother-in-law left you as large an income as may be found on this side Trent, but I
will be bound he would stare if he saw the total of the whole of your rent-roll, Lothair. Your affairs have been well administered, though I say it who ought not. But it is not my management only, or principally, that has done it. It is the progress of the country, and you owe the country a good deal, and you should never forget you are born to be a protector of its liberties, civil and religious. And if the country sticks to free trade, and would enlarge its currency, and be firm to the Protestant faith, it will, under Divine Providence, continue to progress.

"And here, my boy, I'll just say a word, in no disagreeable manner, about your religious principles. There are a great many stories about, and perhaps they are not true, and I am sure I hope they are not. If popery were only the sign of the cross, and music, and censer-pots, though I think them all superstitions, I'd be free to leave them alone if they would leave me. But popery is a much deeper thing than that, Lothair, and our fathers found it out. They could not stand it, and we should be a craven crew to stand it now. A man should be master in his own house. You will be taking a wife some day; at least it is to be hoped so; and how will you like one of these monsignores to be walking into her bedroom, eh; and talking to her alone when he pleases, and where he pleases; and when you want to consult your wife, which a wise man should often do, to find there is another mind between hers and yours? There's my girls, they are just two young geese, and they have a hankering after popery, having had a Jesuit in the house. I do not know what has become of the women. They are for going into a convent, and they are quite right in that, for if they be papists they will not find a husband easily in Scotland, I wench.

"And as for you, my boy, they will be telling you that it is only just this and just that, and there's no great difference, and what not; but I tell you that, if once you embrace the scarlet lady, you are a tainted corpse. You'll not be able to order your dinner without a priest, and they will ride your best horses without saying with your leave or by your leave."

The concert in time ceased; there was a stir in the room; the Rev. Dionysius Smylie moved about mysteriously, and ultimately seemed to make an obeisance before the bishop. It was time for prayers.

"Shall you go?" said Lord St. Aldegonde to Mrs. Campian, by whom he was sitting.

"I like to pray alone," she answered.

"As for that," said Aldegonde, "I am not clear we ought to pray at all, either in public or private. It seems very arrogant in us to dictate to an all-wise Creator what we desire."

"I believe in the efficacy of prayer," said Theodora.

"And I believe in you," said St. Aldegonde, after a momentary pause.

### CHAPTER XLVII.

On the morrow, the early celebration in the chapel was numerously attended. The duchess and her daughters, Lady Agramont, and Mrs. Ardenne, were among the faithful; but what encouraged and gratified the bishop was, that the laymen, on whom he less relied, were numerously represented. The lord-lieutenant, Lord Carisbrooke, Lord Montairy, Bertram, and Hugo Bohun, accompanied Lothair to the altar.

After the celebration, Lothair retired to his private apartments. It was arranged that he was to join his assembled friends at noon, when he would receive their congratulations, and some deputations from the county.

At noon, therefore, preparatively preceded by Mr. Putney Giles, whose thought was never asleep, and whose eye was on every thing, the guardians, the cardinal, and the Earl of Culloden, waited on Lothair to accompany him to his assembled friends, and, as it were, launch him into the world.

They were assembled at one end of the chief gallery, and in a circle. Although the deputations would have to advance the whole length of the chamber, Lothair and his guardians entered from a side apartment.
Even with this assistance he felt very nervous. There was no lack of feeling, and, among many, of deep feeling, on this occasion, but there was an equal and a genuine exhibition of ceremony.

The lord-lieutenant was the first person who congratulated Lothair, though the high-sheriff had pushed forward for that purpose, but, in his awkward precipitation, he got involved with the train of the Hon. Lady Clotworthy, who bestowed on him such a withering glance, that he felt a routed man, and gave up the attempt. There were many kind and some earnest words. Even St. Aldegonde acknowledged the genius of the occasion. He was grave, graceful, and dignified, and, addressing Lothair by his title, he said, “that he hoped he would meet in life that happiness which he felt confident he deserved.” Theodora said nothing, though her lips seemed once to move; but she retained for a moment Lothair’s hand, and the expression of her countenance touched his innermost heart. Lady Corisande beamed with dazzling beauty. Her countenance was joyous, radiant; her mien imperial and triumphant. She gave her hand with graceful alacrity to Lothair, and said in a hushed tone, but every word of which reached his ear, “One of the happiest hours of my life was eight o’clock this morning.”

The lord-lieutenant and the county members then retired to the other end of the gallery, and ushered in the deputation of the magistracy of the county, congratulating their new brother, for Lothair had just been appointed to the bench, on his accession to his estates. The lord-lieutenant himself read the address, to which Lothair replied with a propriety all acknowledged. Then came the address of the mayor and corporation of Grandchester, of which city Lothair was hereditary high-steward; and then that of his tenantry, which was cordial and characteristic. And here many were under the impression that this portion of the proceedings would terminate; but it was not so. There had been some whispering between the bishop and the archdeacon, and the Rev. Dionysius Smylie had, after conference with his superiors, twice left the chamber. It seems that the clergy had thought fit to take this occasion of congratulating Lothair on his great accession, and the proportionate duties which it would fall on him to fulfill. The bishop approached Lothair and addressed him in a whisper. Lothair seemed surprised and a little agitated, but apparently bowed assent. Then the bishop and his staff proceeded to the end of the gallery and introduced a diocesan deputation, consisting of archdeacons and rural deans, who presented to Lothair a most uncompromising address, and begged his acceptance of a bible and prayer-book richly bound, and borne by the Rev. Dionysius Smylie on a cushion of velvet.

The habitual pallor of the cardinal’s countenance became unusually wan; the cheek of Clare Arundel was a crimson flush; Monsignore Catesby bit his lip; Theodora looked with curious seriousness, as if she were observing the manners of a foreign country; St. Aldegonde snorted, and pushed his hand through his hair, which had been arranged in unusual order. The great body of those present, unaware that this deputation was unexpected, were unmoved.

It was a trial for Lothair, and scarcely a fair one. He was not unequal to it, and what he said was esteemed, at the moment, by all parties as satisfactory; though the archdeacon, in secret conclave, afterward observed that he dwelt more on religion than on the Church, and spoke of the Church of Christ and not of the Church of England. He thanked them for their present of volumes, which all must reverence or respect.

While all this was taking place within the Towers, vast bodies of people were assembling without. Besides the notables of the county and his tenantry and their families, which drained all the neighboring villages, Lothair had forwarded several thousand tickets to the mayor and corporation of Grandchester, for distribution among their fellow-townsmen, who were invited to dine at Muriel and partake of the festivities of the day, and trains were hourly arriving with their eager and happy guests. The gardens were at once open.
for their unrestricted pleasure, but at two o'clock, according to the custom of the county under such circumstances, Lothair held what, in fact, was a levee, or rather a drawing-room, when every person who possessed a ticket was permitted, and even invited and expected, to pass through the whole range of the state apartments of Muriel Towers, and at the same time pay their respects to, and make the acquaintance of, their lord.

Lothair stood with his chief friends near him, the ladies, however, seated, and every one passed—farmers and townsfolk, down to the stokers of the trains from Grandchester, with whose presence St. Aldegunde was much pleased, and whom he carefully addressed as they passed by.

After this great reception they all dined in pavilions in the park—one thousand tenantry by themselves, and at a fixed hour; the miscellaneous multitude in a huge crimson tent, very lofty, with many flags, and in which was served a banquet that never stopped till sunset, so that in time all might be satisfied; the notables and deputations, with the guests in the house, lunched in the armory. It was a bright day, and there was unceasing music.

In the course of the afternoon Lothair visited the pavilions, where his health was proposed and pledged—in the first by one of his tenants, and in the other by a workman, both orators of repute; and he addressed and thanked his friends. This immense multitude, orderly and joyous, roamed about the parks and gardens, or danced on a platform which the prescient experience of Mr. Giles had provided for them in a due locality, and whiled away the pleasant hours, in expectation a little feverish of the impending fireworks, which, there was a rumor, were to be on a scale and in a style of which neither Grandchester nor the county had any tradition.

"I remember your words at Blenheim," said Lothair to Theodora. "You cannot say the present party is founded on the principle of exclusion."

In the mean time, about six o'clock, Lothair dined in his great hall with his two hundred guests, at a banquet where all the resources of nature and art seemed called upon to contribute to its luxury and splendor. The ladies, who had never before dined at a public dinner, were particularly delighted. They were delighted by the speeches, though they had very few; they were delighted by the national anthem, all rising; particularly, they were delighted by "three-times-three, and one cheer more," and "hip, hip." It seemed to their unpractised ears like a great naval battle, or the end of the world, or any thing else of unimaginable excitement, tumult, and confusion.

The lord-lieutenant proposed Lothair's health, and dexterously made his comparative ignorance of the subject the cause of his attempting a sketch of what he hoped might be the character of the person whose health he proposed. Every one intuitively felt the resemblance was just, and even complete, and Lothair confirmed their kind and sanguine anticipations by his terse and well-considered reply. His proposition of the ladies' healths was a signal that the carriages were ready to take them, as arranged, to Muriel Mere.

The sun had set in glory over the broad expanse of waters still glowing in the dying beam; the people were assembled in thousands on the borders of the lake, in the centre of which was an island with a pavilion. Fancy barges and gondolas of various shapes and colors were waiting for Lothair and his party, to carry them over to the pavilion, where they found a repast which became the hour and the scene—coffee and ices and whimsical drinks, which sultanas would sip in Arabian tales. No sooner were they seated than the sound of music was heard—distant, but now nearer, till there came floating on the lake, until it rested before the pavilion, a gigantic shell, larger than the building itself, but holding in its golden and opal seats Signor Mardoni and all his orchestra.

Then came a concert rare in itself, but ravishing in the rosy twilight; and in about half an hour, when the rosy twilight had subsided into a violet eve, and when the white moon that had only gleamed began to glitter, the colossal shell again moved on,
and Lothair and his companions, embarking once more in their gondolas, followed it in procession about the lake. He carried in his own bark the duchess, Theodora, and the lord-lieutenant, and was rowed by a crew in Venetian dresses. As he handed Theodora to her seat, the impulse was irresistible—he pressed her hand to his lips.

Suddenly a rocket rose with a hissing rush from the pavilion. It was instantly responded to from every quarter of the lake. Then the island seemed on fire, and the scene of their late festivity became a brilliant palace, with pediments and columns and statues, bright in the blaze of colored flame. For half an hour the sky seemed covered with blue lights and the bursting forms of many-colored stars; golden fountains, like the eruption of a marine volcano, rose from different parts of the water; the statued palace on the island changed and became a forest glowing with green light; and finally a temple of cerulean tint, on which appeared in huge letters of prismatic color the name of Lothair.

The people cheered, but even the voice of the people was overcome by troops of rockets rising from every quarter of the lake, and by the thunder of artillery. When the noise and the smoke had both subsided, the name of Lothair still legible on the temple but the letters quite white, it was perceived that on every height for fifty miles round they had fired a beacon.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The ball at Muriel which followed the concert on the lake was one of those balls which, it would seem, never would end. All the preliminary festivities, instead of exhausting the guests of Lothair, appeared only to have excited them, and rendered them more romantic and less tolerant of the routine of existence. They danced in the great gallery, which was brilliant and crowded, and they danced as they dance in a festive dream, with joy and the enthusiasm of gayety. The fine ladies would sanction no exclusiveness. They did not confine their inspiring society, as is sometimes too often the case, to the Brecons and the Bertrams and the Carlsbrookes; they danced fully and freely with the youth of the county, and felt that in so doing they were honoring and gratifying their host.

At one o'clock they supped in the armory, which was illuminated for the first time, and a banquet in a scene so picturesque and resplendent renovated not merely their physical energies. At four o'clock the duchess and a few others quietly disappeared, but her daughters remained, and St. Aldegonde danced endless reels, which was a form in which he preferred to worship Terpsichore. Perceiving by an open window that it was dawn, he came up to Lothair and said, "This is a case of breakfast."

Happy and frolicsome suggestion! The invitations circulated, and it was soon known that they were all to gather at the matin meal.

"I am so sorry that her grace has retired," said Hugo Bohun to Lady St. Aldegonde, as he fed her with bread and butter, "because she always likes early breakfasts in the country."

The sun was shining as the guests of the house retired, and sank into couches from which it seemed they never could rise again; but, long after this, the shouts of servants and the scuffle of carriages intimated that the company in general were not so fortunate and expeditions in their retirement from the scene; and the fields were all busy, and even the towns awake, when the great body of the wearied but delighted wassailers returned from celebrating the majority of Lothair.

In the vast and statesmanlike programme of the festivities of the week, which had been prepared by Mr. and Mrs. Putney Giles, something of interest and importance had been appropriated to the morrow, but it was necessary to erase all this; and for a simple reason—no human being on the morrow morn even appeared—one might say, even stirred. After all the gay tumult in which even thousands had joined, Muriel Towers on the morrow presented a scene which only could have been equalled by the
castle in the fairy tale, inhabited by the Sleeping Beauty.

At length, about two hours after noon, bells began to sound which were not always answered. Then a languid household prepared a meal of which no one for a time partook, till at last a monsignore appeared, and a rival Anglican or two. Then St. Aldegonde came in with a troop of men who had been bathing in the mere, and called loudly for kidneys, which happened to be the only thing not at hand, as is always the case. St. Aldegonde always required kidneys when he had sat up all night and bathed. "But the odd thing is," he said, "you never can get anything to eat in these houses. Their infernal cooks spoil everything. That's why I hate staying with Bertha's people in the north at the end of the year. What I want in November is a slice of cod and a beefsteak, and by Jove I never could get them; I was obliged to come to town. It is no joke to have to travel three hundred miles for a slice of cod and a beefsteak."

Notwithstanding all this, however, such is the magic of custom, that by sunset civilization had resumed its reign at Muriel Towers. The party were assembled before dinner in the saloon, and really looked as fresh and bright as if the exhausting and tumultuous yesterday had never happened. The dinner, too, notwithstanding the criticism of St. Aldegonde, was first rate, and pleased palates not so simply fastidious as his own. The bishop and his suite were to depart on the morrow, but the cardinal was to remain. His eminence talked much to Mrs. Campian, by whom, from the first, he was much struck. He was aware that she was born a Roman, and was not surprised that, having married a citizen of the United States, her sympathies were what are styled liberal; but this only stimulated his anxious resolution to accomplish her conversion, both religious and political. He recognized in her a being whose intelligence, imagination, and grandeur of character, might be of invaluable service to the Church.

In the evening Monsieur Raphael and his sister, and their colleagues, gave a representa-
your own master; I can use no control over you but that influence which the words of truth must always exercise over an ingenuous mind."

His eminence paused for a moment and looked at his companion; but Lothair remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

"It has always been a source of satisfaction, I would even say consolation, to me," resumed the cardinal, "to know you were a religious man; that your disposition was reverential, which is the highest order of temperament, and brings us nearest to the angels. But we live in times of difficulty and danger—extreme difficulty and danger; a religious disposition may suffice for youth in the tranquil hour, and he may find, in due season, his appointed resting-place: but these are days of imminent peril; the soul requires a sanctuary. Is yours at hand?"

The cardinal paused, and Lothair was obliged to meet a direct appeal. He said then, after a momentary hesitation: "When you last spoke to me, sir, on these grave matters, I said I was in a state of great despondency. My situation now is not so much despondent as perplexed."

"And I wish you to tell me the nature of your perplexity," replied the cardinal, "for there is no anxious embarrassment of mind which Divine truth cannot disentangle and allay."

"Well," said Lothair, "I must say I am often perplexed at the differences which obtrude themselves between Divine truth and human knowledge."

"These are inevitable," said the cardinal. "Divine truth being unchangeable, and human knowledge changing every century; rather, I should say, every generation."

"Perhaps, instead of human knowledge, I should have said human progress," rejoined Lothair.

"Exactly," said the cardinal, "but what is progress? Movement. But what if it be movement in the wrong direction? What if it be a departure from Divine truth?"

"But I cannot understand why religion should be inconsistent with civilization," said Lothair.

"Religion is civilization," said the cardinal; "the highest: it is a reclamation of man from savageness by the Almighty. What the world calls civilization, as distinguished from religion, is a retrograde movement, and will ultimately lead us back to the barbarism from which we have escaped. For instance, you talk of progress: what is the chief social movement of all the countries that three centuries ago separated from the unity of the Church of Christ? The rejection of the sacrament of Christian matrimony. The introduction of the law of divorce, which is, in fact, only a middle term to the abolition of marriage. What does that mean? The extinction of the home and the household on which God has rested civilization. If there be no home, the child belongs to the state, not to the parent. The state educates the child, and without religion, because the state in a country of progress acknowledges no religion. For every man is not only to think as he likes, but to write and to speak as he likes, and to sow with both hands broadcast, where he will, errors, heresies, and blasphemies, without any authority on earth to restrain the scattering of this seed of universal desolation. And this system, which would substitute for domestic sentiment and Divine belief the unlimited and licentious action of human intellect and human will, is called progress. What is it but a revolt against God?"

"I am sure I wish there were only one Church and one religion," said Lothair.

"There is only one Church and only one religion," said the cardinal; "all other forms and phrases are mere phantasm, without root, or substance, or coherency. Look at that unhappy Germany, once so proud of its Reformation. What they call the leading journal tells us to-day, that it is a question there whether four-fifths or three-fourths of the population believe in Christianity. Some portion of it has already gone back, I understand, to Number Nip. Look at this unfortunate land, divided, subdivided, parcelled out in infinite seism, with new oracles every day, and each more distinguished for the narrowness of his intellect or the loudness of his lungs; once the land of saints and scholars, and people in
pious pilgrimages, and finding always solace and support in the divine offices of an ever-present Church, which were a true though a faint type of the beautiful future that awaited man. Why, only three centuries of this rebellion against the Most High have produced throughout the world, on the subject the most important that man should possess a clear, firm faith, an anarchy of opinion, throwing out every monstrous and fantastic form, from a caricature of the Greek philosophy to a revival of Arianism.”

“It is a chaos,” said Lothair, with a sigh.

“From which I wish to save you,” said the cardinal, with some eagerness. “This is not a time to hesitate. You must be for God, or for Antichrist. The Church calls upon her children.”

“I am not unfaithful to the Church,” said Lothair, “which was the Church of my fathers.”

“The Church of England,” said the cardinal. “It was mine. I think of it ever with tenderness and pity. Parliament made the Church of England, and Parliament will unmake the Church of England. The Church of England is not the Church of the English. Its fate is sealed. It will soon become a sect, and all sects are fantastic. It will adopt new dogmas, or it will allure old ones; any thing to distinguish it from the non-conforming herd in which, nevertheless, it will be its fate to merge. The only consolation hope is that, when it falls, many of its children, by the aid of the Blessed Virgin, may return to Christ.”

“What I regret, sir,” said Lothair, “is that the Church of Rome should have placed itself in antagonism with political liberty. This adds to the difficulties which the religions cause has to encounter; for it seems impossible to deny that political freedom is now the sovereign passion of communities.”

“I cannot admit,” replied the cardinal, “that the Church is in antagonism with political freedom. On the contrary, in my opinion, there can be no political freedom which is not founded on Divine authority; otherwise it can be at the best but a specious phantom of license inevitably terminating in anarchy. The rights and liberties of the people of Ireland have no advocates except the Church; because, there, political freedom is founded on Divine authority; but, if you mean by political freedom the schemes of the Illuminati and the freemasons, which perpetually torture the Continent, all the dark conspiracies of the secret societies, there, I admit, the Church is in antagonism with such aspirations after liberty; those aspirations, in fact, are blasphemy and plunder; and, if the Church were to be destroyed, Europe would be divided between the atheist and the communist.”

There was a pause; the conversation had unexpectedly arrived at a point where neither party cared to pursue it. Lothair felt he had said enough; the cardinal was disappointed with what Lothair had said. His eminence felt that his late ward was not in that ripe state of probation which he had fondly anticipated; but, being a man not only of vivid perception, but also of fertile resource, while he seemed to close the present conversation, he almost immediately pursued his object by another combination of means. Noticing an effect of scenery which pleased him, reminded him of Styria, and so on, he suddenly said: “You should travel.”

“Well, Bertram wants me to go to Egypt with him,” said Lothair.

“A most interesting country,” said the cardinal, “and well worth visiting. It is astonishing what a good guide old Herodotus still is in that land! But you should know something of Europe before you go there. Egypt is rather a land to end with. A young man should visit the chief capitals of Europe, especially the seats of learning and the arts. If my advice were asked by a young man who contemplated travelling on a proper scale, I should say begin with Rome. Almost all that Europe contains is derived from Rome. It is always best to go to the fountain-head, to study the original. The society too, there, is delightful; I know none equal to it. That, if you please, is civilization—pious and refined. And the people—all so gifted and so good—so kind, so orderly, so charitable, so truly virtuous. I believe the Roman people to be the best people that ever lived, and this too while the secret societies have their foreign
agents in every quarter, trying to corrupt them, but always in vain. If an act of political violence occurs, you may be sure it is confined entirely to foreigners."

"Our friends the St. Jeromes are going to Rome," said Lothair.

"Well, and that would be pleasant for you. Think seriously of this, my dear young friend. I could be of some little service to you if you go to Rome, which, after all, every man ought to do. I could put you in the way of easily becoming acquainted with all the right people, who would take care that you saw Rome with profit and advantage."

Just at this moment, in a winding glade, they were met abruptly by a third person. All seemed rather to start at the sudden encounter; and then Lothair eagerly advanced and welcomed the stranger with a proffered hand.

"This is a most unexpected, but to me most agreeable, meeting," he said. "You must now be my guest."

"That would be a great honor," said the stranger, "but one I cannot enjoy. I had to wait at the station a couple of hours or so for my train, and they told me if I strolled here I should find some pretty country. I have been so pleased with it, that I fear I have strolled too long, and I literally have not an instant at my command," and he hurried away.

"Who is that person?" asked the cardinal with some agitation.

"I have not the slightest idea," said Lothair. "All I know is, he once saved my life."

"And all I know is," said the cardinal, "he once threatened mine."

"Strange!" said Lothair, and then he rapidly recounted to the cardinal his adventure at the Fenian meeting.

"Strange!" echoed his eminence.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Mrs. Campian did not appear at luncheon, which was observed but not noticed. Afterward, while Lothair was making some arrangements for the amusement of his guests, and contriving that they should fit in with the chief incident of the day, which was the banquet given to him by the county, and which it was settled the ladies were not to attend, the colonel took him aside and said, "I do not think that Theodora will care to go out to-day."

"She is not unwell, I hope?"

"Not exactly—but she has had some news, some news of some friends, which has disturbed her. And, if you will excuse me, I will request your permission not to attend the dinner to-day, which I had hoped to have had the honor of doing. But I think our plans must be changed a little. I almost think we shall not go to Scotland after all."

"There is not the slightest necessity for your going to the dinner. You will have plenty to keep you in countenance at home. Lord St. Aldegonde is not going, nor I fancy any of them. I shall take the duke with me and Lord Culloden, and, if you do not go, I shall take Mr. Putney Giles. The lord-lieutenant will meet us there. I am sorry about Mrs. Campian, because I know she is not ever put out by little things. May I not see her in the course of the day? I should be very sorry that the day should pass over without seeing her."

"Oh! I dare say she will see you in the course of the day, before you go."

"When she likes. I shall not go out today; I shall keep in my rooms, always at her commands. Between ourselves, I shall not be sorry to have a quiet morning and collect my ideas a little. Speech-making is a new thing for me. I wish you would tell me what to say to the county."

Lothair had appropriated to the Campians one of the most convenient and complete apartments in the castle. It consisted of four chambers, one of them a saloon which had been fitted up for his mother when she married; a pretty saloon, hung with pale-green silk, and portraits and scenes inlaid by Vanloo and Boucher. It was rather late in the afternoon when Lothair received a message from Theodora in reply to the wish that he had expressed of seeing her.

When he entered the room, she was not
seated; her countenance was serious. She advanced, and thanked him for wishing to see her, and regretted she could not receive him at an earlier hour. "I fear it may have inconvenienced you," she added; "but my mind has been much disturbed, and too agitated for conversation."

"Even now I may be an intruder?"

"No, it is past; on the contrary, I wish to speak to you; indeed, you are the only person with whom I could speak," and she sat down.

Her countenance, which was unusually pale when he entered, became flushed. "It is not a subject for the festive hour of your life," she said, "but I cannot resist my fate."

"Your fate must always interest me," murmured Lothair.

"Yes; but my fate is the fate of ages and of nations," said Theodora, throwing up her head with that tumult of the brow which he had once before noticed. "Amid the tortures of my spirit at this moment, not the least is that there is only one person I can appeal to, and he is one to whom I have no right to make that appeal."

"If I be that person," said Lothair, "you have every right, for I am devoted to you."

"Yes; but it is not personal devotion that is the qualification needed. It is not sympathy with me that would authorize such an appeal. It must be sympathy with a cause, and a cause for which, I fear, you do not—perhaps I should say you cannot—feel."

"Why?" said Lothair.

"Why should you feel for my fallen country, who are the proudest citizen of the proudest of lands? Why should you feel for its debasing thraldom—you who, in the religious mystification of man, have, at least, the noble privilege of being a Protestant?"

"You speak of Rome?"

"Yes, of the only thought I have, or ever had. I speak of that country which first impressed upon the world a general and enduring form of masculine virtue; the land of liberty, and law, and eloquence, and military genius, now garrisoned by monks, and governed by a doting priest."

"Everybody must be interested about Rome," said Lothair. "Rome is the country of the world, and even the doting priest you talk of boasts of two hundred millions of subjects."

"If he were at Avignon again, I should not care for his boasts," said Theodora. "I do not grudge him his spiritual subjects; I am content to leave his superstition to Time. Time is no longer slow; his scythe mows quickly in this age. But when his debasing creeds are palmed off on man by the authority of our glorious capitol, and the slavery of the human mind is schemed and carried on in the forum, then, if there be real Roman blood left—and I thank my Creator there is much—it is time for it to mount and move," and she rose and walked up and down the room.

"You have had news from Rome?" said Lothair.

"I have had news from Rome," she replied, speaking slowly in a deep voice; and there was a pause.

Then Lothair said: "When you have alluded to these matters before, you never spoke of them in a sanguine spirit."

"I have seen the cause triumph," said Theodora; "the sacred cause of truth, of justice, of national honor. I have sat at the feet of the triumvirate of the Roman Republic; men who, for virtue, and genius, and warlike skill and valor, and every quality that exalts man, were never surpassed in the olden time—no, not by the Catons and the Scipios; and I have seen the blood of my own race poured, like a rich vintage, on the victorious Roman soil; my father fell, who, in stature and in mien, was a god; and, since then, my beautiful brothers, with shapes to enshrine in temples; and I have smiled amid the slaughter of my race, for I believed that Rome was free; and yet all this vanished. Now, then, when we talked, could I be sanguine?"

"And yet you are sanguine now?" said Lothair, with a scrutinizing glance; and he rose and joined her, leaning slightly on the mantel-piece.

"There was only one event that could secure the success of our efforts," said Theodora, "and that event was so im-
probable, that I had long rejected it from
calculation. It has happened, and Rome
calls upon me to act."

"The Papalini are strong," continued
Theodora, after a pause; "they have been
long preparing for the French evacuation;
they have a considerable and disciplined
force of janizaries, a powerful artillery, the
strong places of the city. The result of
a rising, under such circumstances, might
be more than doubtful; if unsuccessful, to
us it would be disastrous. It is necessary
that the Roman States should be invaded,
and the papal army must then quit their
capital. We have no fear of them in the
field. Yes," she added, with energy, "we
could sweep them from the face of the
earth!"

"But the army of Italy," said Lothair,
"will that be inert?"

"There it is," said Theodora. "That
has been our stumbling-block. I have al-
ways known that, if ever the French quit-
ted Rome, it would be on the understanding
that the house of Savoy should inherit the
noble office of securing our servitude. He
in whom I alone confide would never credit
this; but my information, in this respect,
was authentic. However, it is no longer
necessary to discuss the question. News
has come, and in no uncertain shape, that,
whatever may have been the understanding,
under no circumstances will the Italian army
enter the Roman state. We must strike,
therefore, and Rome will be free. But how
am I to strike? We have neither money
nor arms. We have only men. I can give
them no more, because I have already given
them every thing, except my life, which is
always theirs. As for my husband, who, I
may say, wedded me on the battle-field, so
far as wealth was concerned, he was then a
prince among princes, and would pour forth
his treasure, and his life, with equal eager-
ness. But things have changed since As-
primonte. The struggle in his own coun-
try has entirely deprived him of revenues
as great as any forfeited by their Italian
princelings. In fact, it is only by a chance
that he is independent. Had it not been for
an excellent man, one of your great English
merchants, who was his agent here, and
managed his affairs, we should have been
penniless. His judicious investments of the
superfluity of our income, which, at the
time, my husband never even noticed, have
secured for Colonel Campian the means of
that decorous life which he appreciates—
but no more. As for myself, these consid-
erations are nothing. I will not say I should
be insensible to a refined life with refined
companions, if the spirit were content and
the heart serene; but I never could fully
realize the abstract idea of what they call
wealth; I never could look upon it except
as a means to an end, and my end has gen-
erally been military material. Perhaps the
vicissitudes of my life have made me insen-
sible to what are called reverses of fortune,
for, when a child, I remember sleeping on
the moonlit flags of Paris, with no pillow
except my tambourine; and I remember it
not without delight. Let us sit down. I
feel I am talking in an excited, injudicious,
egotistical, rhapsodical, manner. I thought
I was calm, and I meant to have been clear.
But the fact is, I am ashamed of myself. I
am doing a wrong thing, and in a wrong
manner. But I have had a sleepless night,
and a day of brooding thought. I meant
once to have asked you to help me, and now
I feel that you are the last person to whom
I ought to appeal."

"In that you are in error," said Lothair,
rising and taking her hand with an ex-
pression of much gravity; "I am the right
person for you to appeal to—the only per-
son."

"Nay," said Theodora, and she shook
her head.

"For I owe to you a debt that I never
can repay," continued Lothair. "Had it
not been for you, I should have remained
what I was when we first met, a prejudiced,
narrow-minded being, with contracted sym-
pathies and false knowledge, wasting my
life on obsolete trifles, and utterly insensible
to the privilege of living in this wondrous
age of change and progress. Why, had it
not been for you I should have at this very
moment been lavishing my fortune on an
ecclesiastical toy, which I think of with a
blush. There may be—doubtless there
are—opinions in which we may not agree;
but in our love of truth and justice there is no difference, dearest lady. No; though you must have felt that I am not—that no one could be—insensible to your beauty and infinite charms, still it is your consummate character that has justly fascinated my thought and heart; and I have long resolved, were I permitted, to devote to you my fortune and my life.”

CHAPTER I.

The month of September was considerably advanced, when a cab, evidently from its luggage fresh from the railway, entered the court-yard of Hexham House, of which the shuttered windows indicated the absence of its master, the cardinal, then in Italy. But it was evident that the person who had arrived was expected, for before his servant could ring the hall-bell the door opened, and a grave-looking domestic advanced with much deference, and awaited the presence of no less a personage than Monsignore Berwick.

“We have had a rough passage, good Clifford,” said the great man, alighting, “but I see you duly received my telegram. You are always ready.”

“I hope my lord will find it not uncomfortable,” said Clifford. “I have prepared the little suite which you mentioned, and have been careful that there should be no outward sign of any one having arrived.”

“And now,” said the monsignore, stopping for a moment in the hall, “here is a letter which must be instantly delivered, and by a trusty hand,” and he gave it to Mr. Clifford, who, looking at the direction, nodded his head and said, “By no one but myself. I will show my lord to his rooms, and depart with this instantly.”

“And bring back a reply,” added the monsignore.

The well-lit room, the cheerful fire, the judicious reflection on a side-table, were all circumstances which usually would have been agreeable to a wearyed traveller, but Monsignore Berwick seemed little to regard them. Though a man in general superior to care, and master of thought, his countenance was troubled and pensive even to dejection.

“Even the winds and waves are against us,” he exclaimed, too restless to be seated, and walking up and down the room with his arms behind his back. “That such a struggle should fall to my lot! Why was I not a minister in the days of the Gregories, the Innocents, even the Leos! But this is craven. There should be inspiration in peril, and the greatest where peril is extreme. I am a little upset—with travel and the voyage and those telegrams not being answered. The good Clifford was wisely provident,” and he approached the table and took one glass of wine. “Good! One must never despair in such a cause. And if the worse happens, it has happened before—and what then? Suppose Avignon over again, or even Gaeta, or even Paris? So long as we never relinquish our title to the Eternal City we shall be eternal. But then, some say, our enemies before were the sovereigns; now it is the people. Is it so? True we have vanquished kings, and baffled emperors—but the French Republic and the Roman Republic have alike reigned and ruled in the Vatican, and where are they? We have lost provinces, but we have also gained them. We have twelve millions of subjects in the United States of America, and they will increase like the sands of the sea. Still it is a hideous thing to have come back, as it were, to the days of the Constable of Bourbon, and to be contemplating the siege of the Holy See, and massacre and pillage and ineffable horrors! The papacy may survive such calamities, as it undoubtedly will, but I shall scarcely figure in history if, under my influence, such visitations should accrue. If I had only to deal with men, I would not admit of failure; but when your antagonists are human thoughts, represented by invisible powers, there is something that might baffle a Machiavel and appall a Borgia.”

While he was meditating in this vein the door opened, and Mr. Clifford, with some hasty action and speaking rapidly, exclaimed:
"He said he would be here sooner than myself. His carriage was at the door. I drove back as soon as possible—and indeed I hear something now in the court," and he disappeared.

It was only to usher in, almost immediately, a stately personage in an evening dress, and wearing a decoration of a high class, who saluted the monsignor with great cordiality.

"I am engaged to dine with the Prussian ambassador, who has been obliged to come to town to receive a prince of the blood who is visiting the dockyards here; but I thought you might be later than you expected, and I ordered my carriage to be in waiting, so that we have a good little hour—and I can come on to you again afterward, if that will not do."

"A little hour with us is a long hour with other people," said the monsignor, "because we are friends and can speak without windings. You are a true friend to the Holy See; you have proved it. We are in great trouble and need of aid."

"I hear that things are not altogether as we could wish," said the gentleman in an evening dress; "but I hope, and should think, only annoyances."

"Dangers," said Berwick, "and great."

"How so?"

"Well, we have invasion threatening us without and insurrection within," said Berwick. "We might, though it is doubtful, successfully encounter one of these perils, but their united action must be fatal."

"All this has come suddenly," said the gentleman. "In the summer you had no fear, and our people wrote to us, that we might be perfectly tranquil."

"Just so," said Berwick. "If we had met a month ago, I should have told you the same thing. A month ago the revolution seemed lifeless, penniless; without a future, without a resource. They had no money, no credit, no men. At present, quietly but regularly, they are assembling by thousands on our frontiers; they have to our knowledge received two large consignments of small-arms, and apparently have unlimited credit with the trade, both in Birmingham and Liége; they have even artillery; every thing is paid for in coin or in good bills—and, worst of all, they have a man, the most consummate soldier in Europe. I thought he was at New York, and was in hopes he would never have recrossed the Atlantic—but I know that he passed through Florence a fortnight ago, and I have seen a man who says he spoke to him at Narni."

"The Italian government must stop all this," said the gentleman.

"They do not stop it," said Berwick. "The government of his holiness has made every representation to them: we have placed in their hands indubitable evidence of the illegal proceedings that are taking place, and of the internal dangers we experience in consequence of their exterior movements. But they do nothing: it is even believed that the royal troops are joining the insurgents, and Garibaldi is spouting with impunity in every balcony of Florence."

"You may depend upon it that our government is making strong representations to the government of Florence."

"I come from Paris and elsewhere," said Berwick, with animation and perhaps a degree of impatience. "I have seen everybody there, and I have heard every thing. It is not representations that are wanted from your government; it is something of a different kind."

"But if you have seen everybody at Paris and heard every thing, how can I help you?"

"By acting upon the government here. A word from you to the English minister would have great weight at this juncture. Queen Victoria is interested in the maintenance of the papal throne. Her Catholic subjects are counted by millions. The influence of his holiness has been hitherto exercised against the Fenians. France would interfere, if she was sure the step would not be disapproved by England."

"Interfere!" said the gentleman. "Our return to Rome almost before we have paid our laundresses' bills in the Eternal City would be a diplomatic scandal."

"A diplomatic scandal would be preferable to a European revolution."

"Suppose we were to have both?" and the gentleman drew his chair near the fire.
"I am convinced that a want of firmness now," said Berwick, "would lead to inconceivable calamities for all of us."

"Let us understand each other, my very dear friend Berwick," said his companion, and he threw his arm over the back of his chair and looked the Roman full in his face. "You say you have been at Paris and elsewhere, and have seen everybody and heard every thing?"

"Yes, yes."

"Something has happened to us also during the last month, and as unexpectedly as to yourselves."

"The secret societies? Yes, he spoke to me on that very point, and fully. 'Tis strange, but is only, in my opinion, an additional argument in favor of crushing the evil influence."

"Well, that he must decide. But the facts are startling. A month ago the secret societies in France were only a name; they existed only in the memory of the police, and almost as a tradition. At present we know that they are in complete organization, and what is most strange is, that the prefects write they have information that the Mary-Anne associations, which are essentially republican and are scattered about the provinces, are all revived, and are astir. Mary-Anne, as you know, was the red name for the republic years ago, and there always was a sort of myth that these societies had been founded by a woman. Of course that is all nonsense, but they keep it up; it affects the public imagination, and my government has undoubtedly evidence that the word of command has gone round to all these societies that Mary-Anne has returned and will issue her orders, which must be obeyed."

"The Church is stronger, and especially in the provinces, than the Mary-Anne societies," said Berwick.

"I hope so," said his friend; "but you see, my dear monsignore, the question with us is not so simple as you put it. The secret societies will not tolerate another Roman interference, to say nothing of the diplomatic hubbub, which we might, if necessary, defy; but what if, taking advantage of the general indignation, your new king-

"If Rome falls, not an existing dynasty in Europe will survive five years," said Berwick.

"It may be so," said his companion, but with no expression of incredulity. "You know how consistently and anxiously I have always labored to support the authority of the Holy See, and to maintain its territorial position as the guarantee of its independency; but Fate has decided against us. I cannot indulge in the belief that his holiness will ever regain his lost provinces; a capital without a country is an apparent anomaly, which I fear will always embarrass us. We can treat the possession as the capital of Christendom, but, alas! all the world are not as good Christians as ourselves, and Christendom is a country no longer marked out in the map of the world. I wish," continued the gentleman in a tone almost coaxing—"I wish we could devise some plan which, humanly speaking, would secure to his holiness the possession of his earthly throne forever. I wish I could induce you to consider more favorably that suggestion, that his holiness should content himself with the ancient city, and, in possession of St. Peter's and the Vatican, leave the rest of Rome to the vulgar cares and the mundane anxieties of the transient generation. Yes," he added with energy, "if, my dear Berwick, you could see your way to this, or something like this, I think even now and at once, I could venture to undertake that the emperor, my master, would soon put an end to all these disturbances and dangers, and that—"

"Non possumus," said Berwick, sternly stopping him; "sooner than that Attila, the Constable of Bourbon, or the blasphemous orgies of the Red Republic! After all, it is the Church against the secret societies. They are the only two strong things in Europe, and will survive kings, emperors, or parliaments."

At this moment there was a tap at the
door, and, bidden to enter, Mr. Clifford presented himself with a sealed paper, for the gentleman in evening dress. "Your secretary, sir, brought this, which he said must be given you before you went to the ambassador."

"'Tis well," said the gentleman, and he rose, and with a countenance of some excitement read the paper, which contained a telegram; and then he said: "This, I think, will help us out of our immediate difficulties, my dear monsignore. Rattazzi has behaved like a man of sense, and has arrested Garibaldi. But you do not seem, my friend, as pleased as I should have anticipated."

"Garibaldi has been arrested before," said Berwick.

"Well, well, I am hopeful; but I must go to my dinner. I will see you again tomorrow."

CHAPTER LI.

The continuous gathering of what, in popular language, were styled the Garibaldi Volunteers, on the southern border of the papal territory in the autumn of 1867, was not the only or perhaps the greatest danger which then threatened the Holy See, though the one which most attracted its alarmed attention. The considerable numbers in which this assemblage was suddenly occurring; the fact that the son of the Liberator had already taken its command, and only as the precursor of his formidable sire; the accredited rumor that Ghirelli at the head of a purely Roman legion was daily expected to join the frontier force; that Nico- tera was stirring in the old Neapolitan kingdom, while the Liberator himself at Florence and in other parts of Tuscany was even ostentatiously, certainly with impunity, preaching the new crusade and using all his irresistible influence with the populace to excite their sympathies and to stimulate their energy, might well justify the extreme apprehension of the court of Rome. And yet dangers at least equal, and almost as close, were at the same time preparing unnoticed and unknown.

In the mountainous range between Fiascone and Viterbo, contiguous to the sea, is a valley surrounded by chains of steep and barren hills, but which is watered by a torrent scarcely dry even in summer; so that the valley itself, which is not inconsiderable in its breadth, is never without verdure, while almost a forest of brushwood formed of shrubs, which in England we should consider rare, bounds the natural turf and ascends sometimes to no inconsiderable height the nearest hills.

Into this valley, toward the middle of September, there defiled one afternoon through a narrow pass a band of about fifty men, all armed, and conducting a cavalcade or rather a caravan of mules laden with munitions of war and other stores. When they had gained the centre of the valley and a general halt was accomplished, their commander, accompanied by one who was apparently an officer, surveyed all the points of the locality; and, when their companions had rested and refreshed themselves, they gave the necessary orders for the preparation of a camp. The turf already afforded a sufficient area for their present wants, but it was announced that on the morrow they must commence clearing the brushwood. In the mean time, one of the liveliest scenes of military life soon rapidly developed itself: the canvas houses were pitched, the sentries appointed, the videttes established. The commissariat was limited to bread and olives, and generally the running stream, varied sometimes by coffee, and always cooled by tobacco.

On the third day, amid their cheerful though by no means light labors, a second caravan arrived, evidently expected and heartily welcomed. Then, in another eight- and-forty hours, smaller bodies of men seemed to drop down from the hills, generally without stores, but always armed. Then men came from neighboring islands in open boats, and one morning a considerable detachment crossed the water from Corsica. So that at the end of a week or ten days there was an armed force of several hundred men in this once silent valley, now a scene of constant stir and continual animation, for some one or something was always arriving,
and from every quarter; men and arms and stores crept in from every wild pass of the mountains and every little rocky harbor of the coast.

About this time, while the officer in command was reviewing a considerable portion of the troops, the rest laboring in still clearing the brushwood and establishing the many works incidental to a camp, half a dozen horsemen were seen descending the mountain-pass by which the original body had entered the valley. A scout had preceded them, and the troops with enthusiasm awaited the arrival of that leader, a message from whose magic name had summoned them to this secluded rendezvous from many a distant state and city. Unruffled, but with an inspiring fire in his pleased keen eye, that general answered their devoted salute, whom hitherto we have known by his travelling name of Captain Bruges.

It was only toward the end of the preceding month that he had resolved to take the field; but the organization of the secret societies is so complete that he knew he could always almost instantly secure the assembling of a picked force in a particular place. The telegraph circulated its mystic messages to every part of France and Italy and Belgium, and to some old friends not so conveniently at hand, but who he doubted not would arrive in due time for action. He himself had employed the interval in forwarding all necessary supplies, and he had passed through Florence in order that he might confer with the great spirit of Italian movement and plan with him the impending campaign.

After he had passed in review the troops, the general, with the officers of his staff who had accompanied him, visited on foot every part of the camp. Several of the men he recognized by name; to all of them he addressed some inspiring word; a memory of combats in which they had fought together, or happy allusions to adventures of romantic peril; some question which indicated that local knowledge which is magical for those who are away from home; mixed with all this, sharp, clear inquiries as to the business of the hour, which proved the master of detail, severe in discipline, but never deficient in sympathy for his troops.

After sunset, enveloped in their cloaks, the general and his companions, the party increased by the officers who had been in command previous to his arrival, smoked their cigars round the camp-fire.

"Well, Sarano," said the general, "I will look over your muster-roll to-morrow, but I should suppose I may count on a thousand rifles or so. I want three, and we shall get them. The great man would have supplied them me at once, but I, will not have boys. He must send those on to Menotti. I told him: 'I am not a man of genius; I do not pretend to conquer kingdoms with boys. Give me old soldiers, men who have served a couple of campaigns, and been seasoned with four-and-twenty months of camp-life, and I will not disgrace you or myself.'"

"We have had no news from the other place for a long time," said Sarano. "How is it?"

"Well enough. They are in the mountains about Nerola, in a position not very unlike this; numerically strong, for Nico-tera has joined them, and Ghirelli with the Roman Legion is at hand. They must be quiet till the great man joins them; I am told they are restless. There has been too much noise about the whole business. Had they been as mum as you have been, we should not have had all these representations from France and these threatened difficulties from that quarter. The Papalini would have complained and remonstrated, and Rattazzi could have conscientiously assured the people at Paris that they were dealing with exaggerations and bugbears; the very existence of the frontier force would have become a controversy, and, while the newspapers were proving it was a myth, we should have been in the Vatican."

"And when shall we be there, general?"

"I do not want to move for a month. By that time I shall have two thousand five hundred or three thousand of my old comrades, and the great man will have put his boys in trim. Both bodies must leave their mountains at the same time, join in the open country, and march to Rome."
As the night advanced, several of the party rose and left the camp-fire—some to their tents, some to their duties. Two of the staff remained with the general.

"I am disappointed and uneasy that we have not heard from Paris," said one of them.

"I am disappointed," said the general, "but not uneasy; she never makes a mistake."

"The risk was too great," rejoined the speaker in a depressed tone.

"I do not see that," said the general. "What is the risk? Who could possibly suspect the lady's maid of the Princess of Tivoli! I am told that the princess has become quite a favorite at the Tuileries."

"They say that the police is not so well informed as it used to be; nevertheless, I confess I should be much happier were she sitting round this camp-fire."

"Courage!" said the general. "I do not believe in many things, but I do believe in the divine Theodora. What say you, Captain Muriel? I hope you are not offended by my criticism of your soldiers. You are the youngest in our band, but you have good military stuff in you, and will be soon seasoned."

"I feel I serve under a master of the art," replied Lothair, "and will not take the gloomy view of Colonel Campian about our best friend, though I share all his disappointment. It seems to me that detection is impossible. I am sure that I could not have recognized her when I handed the princess into her carriage."

"The step was absolutely necessary," said the general; "no one could be trusted but herself—no other person has the influence. All our danger is from France. The Italian troops will never cross the frontier to attack us, rest assured of that. I have proof of it. And it is most difficult, almost impossible, for the French to return. There never would have been an idea of such a step, if there had been a little more discretion at Florence, less of those manifestoes and speeches from balconies. But we must not criticise one who is above criticism. Without him we could do nothing, and when he stamps his foot men rise from the earth. I will go the rounds; come with me, Captain Muriel. Colonel, I order you to your tent; you are a veteran—the only one among us, at least on the staff, who was wounded at Aspromonté."

CHAPTER LII.

The life of Lothair had been so strange and exciting since he quitted Muriel Towers that he had found little time for that reflection in which he was once so prone to indulge. Perhaps he shrank from it. If he wanted an easy distraction from self-criticism—it may be a convenient refuge from the scruples, or even the pangs, of conscience—it was profusely supplied by the startling affairs of which he formed a part, the singular characters with whom he was placed in contact, the risk and responsibility which seemed suddenly to have encompassed him with their ever-stimulating influence, and, lastly, by the novelty of foreign travel, which, even under ordinary circumstances, has a tendency to rouse and stir up even ordinary men.

So long as Theodora was his companion in their counsels, and he was listening to her deep plans and daring suggestions, enforced by that calm enthusiasm which was not the least powerful of her commanding spells, it is not perhaps surprising that he should have yielded without an effort to her bewitching ascendancy. But when they had separated, and she had embarked on that perilous enterprise of personally conferring with the chiefs of those secret societies of France, which had been fancifully baptized by her popular name, and had nurtured her tradition as a religious faith, it might have been supposed that Lothair, left to himself, might have recurred to the earlier sentiments of his youth. But he was not left to himself. He was left with her injunctions, and the spirit of the oracle, though the divinity was no longer visible, pervaded his mind and life.

Lothair was to accompany the general as one of his aides-de-camp, and he was to
meet Theodora again on what was contemplated as the field of memorable actions. Theodora had wisely calculated on the influence, beneficial in her view; which the character of a man like the general would exercise over Lothair. This consummate military leader, though he had pursued a daring career, and was a man of strong convictions, was distinguished by an almost unerring judgment, and a mastery of method rarely surpassed. Though he was without imagination or sentiment, there were occasions on which he had shown he was not deficient in a becoming sympathy, and he had a rapid and correct perception of character. He was a thoroughly honest man, and, in the course of a life of great trial and vicissitude, even envenomed foes had never impeached his pure integrity. For the rest; he was unselfish, but severe in discipline, inflexible, and even ruthless in the fulfilment of his purpose. A certain simplicity of speech and conduct, and a disinterestedness which, even in little things, was constantly exhibiting itself, gave to his character even charm, and rendered personal intercourse with him highly agreeable.

In the countless arrangements which had to be made, Lothair was never wearied in recognizing and admiring the presence and precision of his chief; and when the day had died, and for a moment they had ceased from their labors, or were travelling together, often through the night, Lothair found in the conversation of his companion, artless and unrestrained, a wonderful fund of knowledge both of men and things, and that, too, in very different climates and countries.

The camp in the Apennines was not favorable to useless reverie. Lothair found unceasing and deeply-interesting occupation in his numerous and novel duties; and, if his thoughts for a moment wandered beyond the barren peaks around him, they were attracted and engrossed by one subject—and that was, naturally, Theodora. From her they had heard nothing since her departure, except a mysterious, though not discouraging, telegram which was given to them by Colonel Campian when he had joined them at Florence. It was difficult not to feel anxious about her, though the general would never admit the possibility of her personal danger.

In this state of affairs, a week having elapsed since his arrival at the camp, Lothair, who had been visiting the outposts, was summoned one morning by an orderly to the tent of the general. That personage was on his legs when Lothair entered it, and was dictating to an officer writing at a table.

"You ought to know my military secretary," said the general, as Lothair entered, "and therefore I will introduce you."

Lothair was commencing a suitable reverence of recognition as the secretary raised his head to receive it, when he suddenly stopped, changed color, and for a moment seemed to lose himself, and then murmured, "Is it possible?"

It was indeed Theodora: clothed in male attire, she seemed a stripling.

"Quite possible," she said, "and all is well. But I found it a longer business than I had counted on. You see, there are so many new persons who knew me only by tradition, but with whom it was necessary I should personally confer. And I had more difficulty, just now, in getting through Florence than I had anticipated. The Papalini and the French are both worrying our allies in that city about the gathering on the southern frontier, and there is a sort of examination, true or false, I will not aver, of all who depart. However, I managed to pass with some soldiers' wives who were carrying fruit as far as Narni, and there I met an old comrade of Aspromonte, who is a custom-officer now, but true to the good cause, and he, and his daughter, who is with me, helped me through every thing, and so I am with my dear friends again."

After some slight conversation in this vein, Theodora entered into a detailed narrative of her proceedings, and gave to them her views of the condition of affairs.

"By one thing, above all others," she said, "I am impressed, and that is, the unprecedented efforts which Rome is making to obtain the return of the French. There never was such influence exercised, such distinct offers made, such prospects inti-
mated. You may prepare yourself for any thing; a papal coronation, a family pontiff—
I could hardly say a King of Rome, though he has been reminded of that royal fact. Our friends have acted with equal energy and with perfect temper. The heads of the societies have met in council, and resolved that, if France will refuse to interfere, no domestic disturbance shall be attempted during this reign, and they have communicated this resolution to headquarters. He trusts them; he knows they are honest men. They did something like this before the Italian War, when he hesitated about heading the army from the fear of domestic revolution. Anxious to recover the freedom of Italy, they apprized him that, if he personally entered the field, they would undertake to insure tranquillity at home. The engagement was scrupulously fulfilled. When I left Paris all looked well; but affairs require the utmost vigilance and courage. It is a mighty struggle; it is a struggle between the Church and the secret societies; and it is a death-struggle.”

CHAPTER LIII.

During the week that elapsed after the arrival of Theodora at the camp, many recruits, and considerable supplies of military stores, reached the valley. Theodora really acted as secretary to the general, and her labors were not light. Though Lothair was frequently in her presence, they were never, or rarely, alone, and, when they conversed together, her talk was of details. The scouts, too, had brought information, which might have been expected, that their rendezvous was no longer a secret at Rome. The garrison of the neighboring town of Viterbo had, therefore, been increased, and there was even the commencement of an intrenched camp in the vicinity of that place, to be garrisoned by a detachment of the legion of Antibes and other good troops, so that any junction between the general and Garibaldi, if contemplated, should not be easily effected.

In the mean time, the life of the camp was busy. The daily drill and exercise of two thousand men was not a slight affair, and the constant changes in orders which the arrival of bodies of recruits occasioned, rendered this primary duty more difficult; the office of quartermaster required the utmost resource and temper; the commissariat, which, from the nature of the country, could depend little upon forage, demanded extreme husbandry and forbearance. But, perhaps, no labors were more severe than those of the armorers, the clink of whose instruments resounded unceasingly in the valley. And yet such is the magic of method, when directed by a master-mind, that the whole went on with the regularity and precision of machinery. More than two thousand armed men, all of whom had been accustomed to an irregular, some to a lawless, life, were as docile as children; animated, in general, by what they deemed a sacred cause, and led by a chief whom they universally alike adored and feared.

Among these wild warriors, Theodora, delicate and fragile, but with a mien of majesty, moved, like the spirit of some other world, and was viewed by them with admiration not unmixed with awe. Veterans round the camp-fire had told to the new recruits her deeds of prowess and devotion; how triumphantly she had charged at Voltorno, and how heroically she had borne their standard when they were betrayed at fatal Aspromonte.

The sun had sunk behind the mountains, but was still high in the western heaven, when a mounted lancer was observed descending a distant pass into the valley. The general and his staff had not long commenced their principal meal of the day, of which the disappearance of the sun behind the peak was the accustomed signal. This permitted them, without inconvenience, to take their simple repast in the open, but still warm, air. Theodora was seated between the general and her husband, and her eye was the first that caught the figure of the distant but descending stranger.

“What is that?” she asked.

The general, immediately using his telescope, after a moment’s examination, said:
"A lancer of the royal guard."

All eyes were now fixed upon the movements of the horseman. He had descended the winding steep, and now was tracking the craggy path which led into the plain. As he reached the precinct of the camp, he was challenged, but not detained. Nearer and nearer he approached, and it was evident, from his uniform, that the conjecture of his character by the general was correct.

"A deserter from the guard," whispered Colonel Campian, to Lothair.

The horseman was conducted by an officer to the presence of the commander. When that presence was reached, the lancer, still silent, slowly lowered his tall weapon, and offered the general the dispatch which was fastened to the head of his spear.

Every eye was on the countenance of their chief as he perused the missive, but that countenance was always inscrutable. It was observed, however, that he read the paper twice. Looking up, the general said to the officer: "See that the bearer is well quartered.—This is for you," he added in a low voice to Theodora, and he gave her an enclosure; "read it quietly, and then come into my tent."

Theodora read the letter, and quietly; though, without the preparatory hint, it might have been difficult to have concealed her emotion. Then, after a short pause, she rose, and the general, requesting his companions not to disturb themselves, joined her, and they proceeded in silence to his tent.

"He is arrested," said the general when they had entered it, "and taken to Alessandria, where he is a close prisoner. 'Tis a blow, but I am more grieved than surprised."

This was the arrest of Garibaldi at Siggaglia by the Italian government, which had been communicated at Hexham House to Monsignor Berwick by his evening visitor.

"How will it affect operations in the field?" inquired Theodora.

"According to this dispatch, in no degree. Our original plan is to be pursued, and acted upon the moment we are ready. That should be in a fortnight, or perhaps three weeks. Menotti is to take the command on the southern frontier. Well, it may prevent jealousies. I think I shall send Sarano there to reconnoitre; he is well both with Nicotera and Ghirelli, and may keep things straight."

"But there are other affairs besides operations in the field," said Theodora, "and scarcely less critical. Read this," and she gave him the enclosure, which ran in these words:

"The general will tell thee what has happened. Have no fear for that. All will go right. It will not alter our plans a bunch of grapes. Be perfectly easy about this country. No Italian soldier will ever cross the frontier except to combat the French. Write that on thy heart. Are other things as well? Other places? My advices are bad. All the prelates are on their knees to him—with blessings on their lips and curses in their pockets. Archbishop of Paris is as bad as any. Berwick is at Biarritz—an inexhaustible intriguer; the only priest I fear. I hear from one who never misled me that the Polhes brigade has orders to be in readiness. The Mary-Anne societies are not strong enough for the situation—too local; he listens to them, but he has given no pledge. We must go deeper. 'Tis an affair of Madre Natura. Thou must see Colonna."

"Colonna is at Rome," said the general, "and cannot be spared. He is acting president of the National Committee, and has enough upon his hands."

"I must see him," said Theodora. "I had hoped I had heard the last of the Madre Natura."

"And the Neapolitans hope they have heard the last of the eruptions of their mountain," said Theodora; "but the necessities of things are sterner stuff than the hopes of men."

"Tis last effort appalled and outraged Europe," said the general.

"Tis last effort forced the French into Italy, and has freed the country from the Alps to the Adriatic," rejoined Theodora.

"If the great man had only been as quiet as we have been," said the general, lighting a cigar, "we might have been in Rome by this time."

"If the great man had been quiet, we
should not have had a volunteer in our valley," said Theodora. "My faith in him is implicit; he has been right in every thing, and has never failed except when he has been betrayed. I see no hope for Rome except in his convictions and energy. I do not wish to die, and feel I have devoted my life only to secure the triumph of Savoyards who have sold their own country, and of priests whose impostures have degraded me."

"Ah! those priests!" exclaimed the general. "I really do not much care for anything else. They say the Savoyard is not a bad comrade, and at any rate he can charge like a soldier. But those priests? I fluttered them once! Why did I spare any? Why did I not burn down St. Peter's? I proposed it, but Miranda, with his history and his love of art and all that old furniture, would reserve it for a temple of the true God and for the glory of Europe! Fine results we have accomplished! And now we are here, hardly knowing where we are, and, as it appears, hardly knowing what to do."

"Not so, dear general," said Theodora. "Where we are is the threshold of Rome, and if we are wise we shall soon cross it. This arrest of our great friend is a misfortune, but not an irredeemable one. I thoroughly credit what he says about the Italian troops. Rest assured he knows what he is talking about; they will never cross the frontier against us. The danger is from another land. But there will be no peril if we are prompt and firm. Clear your mind of all these dark feelings about the 'Madre Natura.' All that we require is that the most powerful and the most secret association in Europe should ratify what the local societies of France have already intimated. It will be enough. Send for Colonna, and leave the rest to me."

CHAPTER LIV.

The "Madre Natura" is the oldest, the most powerful, and the most occult, of the secret societies of Italy. Its mythic origin reaches the era of paganism, and it is not impossible that it may have been founded by some of the despoiled professors of the ancient faith. As time advanced, the brotherhood assumed many outward forms, according to the varying spirit of the age: sometimes they were freemasons, sometimes they were soldiers, sometimes artists, sometimes men of letters. But whether their external representation were a lodge, a commandery, a studio, or an academy, their inward purpose was ever the same; and that was to cherish the memory, and, if possible, to secure the restoration of the Roman Republic, and to expel from the Aryan settlement of Romulus the creeds and sovereignty of what they styled the Semitic invasion.

The "Madre Natura" have a tradition that one of the most celebrated of the popes was admitted to their fraternity as Cardinal dei Medici, and that when he ascended the throne, mainly through their labors, he was called upon to cooperate in the fulfilment of the great idea. An individual who, in his youth, has been the member of a secret society, and subsequently ascends a throne, may find himself in an embarrassing position. This, however, according to the tradition, which there is some documentary ground to accredit, was not the perplexing lot of his holiness Pope Leo X. His tastes and convictions were in entire unison with his early engagements, and it is believed that he took an early and no unwilling opportunity of submitting to the conclave a proposition to consider whether it were not both expedient and practicable to return to the ancient faith, for which their temples had been originally erected.

The chief tenet of the society of "Madre Natura" is denoted by its name. They could conceive nothing more benevolent and more beautiful, more provident and more powerful, more essentially divine, than that system of creative order to which they owed their being, and in which it was their privilege to exist. But, they differed from other schools of philosophy that have held this faith, in this singular particular: they recognize the inability of the Latin race to pursue the worship of Nature in an abstract spirit,
and they desired to revive those exquisite personifications of the abounding qualities of the mighty mother which the Aryan genius had bequeathed to the admiration of man. Parthenope was again to rule at Naples instead of Janaarius, and starveling saints and winking madonnas were to restore their usurped altars to the god of the silver bow and the radiant daughter of the foaming wave.

Although the society of "Madee Natura" themselves accepted the allegorical interpretation which the Neo-Platonists had placed upon the pagan creeds during the first ages of Christianity, they could not suppose that the populace could ever comprehend an exposition so refined, not to say fanciful. They guarded, therefore, against the corruptions and abuses of the religion of Nature by the entire abolition of the priestly order, and in the principle that every man should be his own priest they believed they had found the necessary security.

As it was evident that the arrest of Garibaldi could not be kept secret, the general thought it most prudent to be himself the herald of its occurrence, which he announced to the troops in a manner as little discouraging as he could devise. It was difficult to extenuate the consequences of so great a blow, but they were assured that it was not a catastrophe, and would not in the slightest degree affect the execution of the plans previously resolved on. Two or three days later some increase of confidence was occasioned by the authentic intelligence that Garibaldi had been removed from his stern imprisonment at Alessandria, and conveyed to his island-home, Caprera, though still a prisoner.

About this time, the general said to Lothair: "My secretary has occasion to go on an expedition. I shall send a small detachment of cavalry with her, and you will be at its head. She has requested that her husband should have this office, but that is impossible; I cannot spare my best officer. It is your first command, and, though I hope it will involve no great difficulty, there is no command that does not require courage and discretion. The distance is not very great, and so long as you are in the mountains you will probably be safe; but in leaving this range and gaining the southern Apennines, which is your point of arrival, you will have to cross the open country. I do not hear the Papalini are in force there; I believe they have concentrated themselves at Rome, and about Viterbo. If you meet any scouts and reconnoitring parties, you will be able to give a good account of them, and probably they will be as little anxious to encounter you as you to meet them. But you must be prepared for every thing, and you may be threatened by the enemy in force; in that case you will cross the Italian frontier, in the immediate neighborhood of which you will keep during the passage of the open country, and surrender yourselves and your arms to the authorities. They will not be very severe; but, at whatever cost and whatever may be the odds, Theodora must never be a prisoner to the Papalini. You will depart to-morrow at dawn."

There is nothing so animating, so invigorating alike to the body and soul, so truly delicious, as travelling among mountains in the early hours of day. The freshness of Nature falls upon a responsive frame, and the nobility of the scene discards the petty thoughts that pester ordinary life. So felt Captain Muriel, as with every military precaution he conducted his little troop and his precious charge among the winding passes of the Apennines; at first dim in the matin twilight, then soft with incipient day, then courseating with golden flashes. Sometimes they descended from the austere heights into the sylvan intricacies of chestnut-forests, amid the rush of waters and the fragrant stir of ancient trees; and, then again ascending to lofty summits, ranges of terminable hills, gray or green, expanded before them, with ever and anon a glimpse of plains, and sometimes the splendor and the odor of the sea.

Theodora rode a mule, which had been presented to the general by some admirer. It was an animal of remarkable beauty and intelligence, perfectly aware, apparently, of the importance of its present trust, and proud of its rich accoutrements, its padded saddle of crimson velvet, and its silver bells. A couple of troopers formed the advanced
guard, and the same number at a certain distance furnished the rear. The body of the detachment, fifteen strong, with the sumpter-mules, generally followed Theodora, by whose side, whenever the way permitted, rode their commander. Since he left England Lothair had never been so much alone with Theodora. What struck him most now, as indeed previously at the camp, was that she never alluded to the past. For her there would seem to be no Muriel Towers, no Belmont, no England. You would have supposed that she had been born in the Apennines and had never quitted them. All her conversation was details, political or military. Not that her manner was changed to Lothair. It was not only as kind as before, but it was sometimes unusually and even unnecessarily tender, as if she reproached herself for the too frequent and too evident self-engrossment of her thoughts, and wished to intimate to him that, though her brain were absorbed, her heart was still gentle and true.

Two hours after noon they halted in a green nook, near a beautiful cascade that descended in a mist down a sylvan cleft, and poured its pellucid stream, for their delightful use, into a natural basin of marble. The men picketed their horses, and their corporal, who was a man of the country and their guide, distributed their rations. All vied with each other in administering to the comfort and convenience of Theodora, and Lothair hovered about her as a bee about a flower, but she was silent, which he wished to impute to fatigue. But she said she was not at all fatigued, indeed quite fresh. Before they resumed their journey he could not refrain from observing on the beauty of their resting-place. She assented with a pleasing nod, and then resuming her accustomed abstraction she said: "The more I think, the more I am convinced that the battle is not to be fought in this country, but in France."

After one more ascent, and that comparatively a gentle one, it was evident that they were gradually emerging from the mountainous region. Their course since their halting lay through a spur of the chief chain they had hitherto pursued, and a little after sunset they arrived at a farm-house, which the corporal informed his captain was the intended quarter of Theodora for the night, as the horses could proceed no farther without rest. At dawn they were to resume their way, and soon to cross the open country, where danger, if any, was to be anticipated.

The farmer was frightened when he was summoned from his house by a party of armed men; but having some good ducats given him in advance, and being assured they were all Christians, he took heart and labored to do what they desired. Theodora duly found herself in becoming quarters, and a sentry was mounted at her residence. The troopers, who had been quite content to wrap themselves in their cloaks and pass the night in the air, were pleased to find no despicable accommodation in the out-buildings of the farm, and still more with the proffered vintage of their host. As for Lothair, he enveloped himself in his mantle and threw himself on a bed of sacks, with a truss of Indian corn for his pillow, and, though he began by musing over Theodora, in a few minutes he was immersed in that profound and dreamless sleep which a life of action and mountain-air combined can alone secure.

CHAPTER LV.

The open country extending from the Apennines to the very gates of Rome, and which they had now to cross, was in general a desert; a plain clothed with a coarse vegetation, and undulating with an interminable series of low and uncouth mounds, without any of the grace of form which always attends the disposition of Nature. Nature had not created them. They were the offspring of man and time, and of their rival powers of destruction. Ages of civilization were engulfed in this drear expanse. They were the tombs of empires and the sepulchers of contending races. The Campagna proper has at least the grace of aqueducts to break its monotony, and everywhere the cerulean spell of distance; but in this grim solitude antiquity has left only the memory
of its violence and crimes, and nothing is beautiful except the sky.

The orders of the general to direct their course as much as possible in the vicinity of the Italian frontier, though it lengthened their journey, somewhat mitigated its dreariness, and an hour after noon, after traversing some flinty fields, they observed in the distance an olive-wood, beneath the pale shade of which, and among whose twisted branches and contorted roots, they had contemplated finding a halting-place. But here the advanced guard observed already an encampment, and one of them rode back to report the discovery.

A needless alarm; for, after a due reconnaissance, they were ascertained to be friends—a band of patriots about to join the general in his encampment among the mountains. They reported that a division of the Italian army was assembled in force upon the frontier, but that several regiments had already signified to their commanders that they would not fight against Garibaldi or his friends. They confirmed also the news that the great leader himself was a prisoner at Caprera; that, although his son Menotti by his command had withdrawn from Nero, his force was really increased by the junction of Ghirelli and the Roman legion, twelve hundred strong, and that five hundred riflemen would join the general in the course of the week.

A little before sunset they had completed the passage of the open country, and had entered the opposite branch of the Apennines, which they had long observed in the distance. After wandering among some rocky ground, they entered a defile amid hills covered with ilex, and thence emerging found themselves in a valley of some expansio and considerable cultivation; bright crops, vineyards in which the vine was married to the elm, orchards full of fruit, and groves of olive; in the distance blue hills that were becoming dark in the twilight, and in the centre of the plain, upon a gentle and wooded elevation, a vast pile of building, the exact character of which at this hour it was difficult to recognize, for, even as Theodora mentioned to Lothair that they now beheld the object of their journey, the twilight seemed to vanish and the stars glistened in the dark heavens.

Though the building seemed so near, it was yet a considerable time before they reached the wooded hill, and, though its ascent was easy, it was night before they halted in face of a huge gate flanked by high stone walls. A single light in one of the windows of the vast pile which it enclosed was the only evidence of human habitation.

The corporal sounded a bugle, and immediately the light moved and noises were heard—the opening of the hall-doors, and then the sudden flame of torches, and the advent of many feet. The great gate slowly opened, and a steward and several serving-men appeared. The steward addressed Theodora and Lothair, and invited them to dismount and enter what now appeared to be a garden with statues and terraces and fountains and rows of cypress, its infinite dilapidation not being recognizable in the deceptive hour; and he informed the escort that their quarters were prepared for them, to which they were at once attended. Guiding their captain and his charge, they soon approached a double flight of steps, and, ascending, reached the main terrace from which the building immediately rose. It was, in truth, a castle of the middle ages, on which a Roman prince, at the commencement of the last century, had engrafted the character of one of those vast and ornate villas then the mode, but its original character still asserted itself, and, notwithstanding its Tuscan basement and its Ionic pilasters, its rich pediments and delicate volutes, in the distant landscape it still seemed a fortress in the commanding position which became the residence of a feudal chief.

They entered, through a Palladian vestibule, a hall which they felt must be of huge dimensions, though with the aid of a single torch it was impossible to trace its limits, either of extent or of elevation. Then bowing before them, and lighting as it were their immediate steps, the steward guided them down a long and lofty corridor, which led to the entrance of several chambers, all vast, with little furniture,
but their walls covered with pictures. At length he opened a door and ushered them into a saloon, which was in itself bright and glowing, but of which the lively air was heightened by its contrast with the preceding scene. It was lofty, and hung with faded satin in gilded panels still bright. An ancient chandelier of Venetian crystal hung illumined from the painted ceiling, and on the silver dogs of the marble hearth a fresh block of cedar had just been thrown and blazed with aromatic light.

A lady came forward and embraced Theodora, and then greeted Lothair with cordiality. "We must dine to-day even later than you do in London," said the Princess of Tivoli, "but we have been expecting you these two hours." Then she drew Theodora aside, and said, "He is here; but you must be tired, my best beloved. As some wise man said: 'Business to-morrow.'"

"No, no," said Theodora; "now, now—I am never tired. The only thing that exhausts me is suspense."

"It shall be so. At present I will take you away to shake the dust off your armor, and, Serafino, attend to Captain Muriel."

CHAPTER LVI.

When they assembled again in the saloon there was an addition to their party in the person of a gentleman of distinguished appearance. His age could hardly have much exceeded that of thirty, but time had agitated his truly Roman countenance, one which we now find only in consular and imperial busts, or in the chance visage of a Roman shepherd or a Neapolitan bandit. He was a shade above the middle height, with a frame of well-knit symmetry. His proud head was proudly placed on broad shoulders, and neither time nor indulgence had marred his slender waist. His dark-brown hair was short and hyacinthine, close to his white forehead, and naturally showing his small ears. He wore no whiskers, and his mustache was limited to the centre of his upper lip.

When Theodora entered and offered him her hand he pressed it to his lips with gravity and proud homage, and then their hostess said: "Captain Muriel, let me present you to a prince who will not bear his titles, and whom, therefore, I must call by his name—Romolo Colonna."

The large folding-doors, richly painted and gilt, though dim from neglect and time, and sustained by columns of precious marbles, were suddenly opened and revealed another saloon, in which was a round table brightly lighted, and to which the princess invited her friends.

Their conversation at dinner was lively and sustained; the travels of the last two days formed a natural part and were apposite to commence with, but they were soon engrossed in the great subject of their lives; and Colonna, who had left Rome only four-and-twenty hours, gave them interesting details of the critical condition of that capital. When the repast was concluded the princess rose, and, accompanied by Lothair, reentered the saloon, but Theodora and Colonna lingered behind, and, finally seating themselves at the farthest end of the apartment in which they had dined, became engaged in earnest conversation.

"You have seen a great deal since we first met at Belmont," said the princess to Lothair.

"It seems to me now," said Lothair, "that I knew as much of life then as I did of the stars above us, about whose purposes and fortunes I used to puzzle myself."

"And might have remained in that ignorance. The great majority of men exist but do not live—like Italy in the last century. The power of the passions, the force of the will, the creative energy of the imagination—these make life, and reveal to us a world of which the million are entirely ignorant. You have been fortunate in your youth to have become acquainted with a great woman. It develops all a man's powers, and gives him a thousand talents."

"I often think," said Lothair, "that I have neither powers nor talents, but am drifting without an orbit."

"Into infinite space," said the princess.
LOTHAIR.

"Well, one might do worse than that. But it is not so. In the long-run your nature will prevail, and you will fulfil your organic purpose; but you will accomplish your ends with a completeness which can only be secured by the culture and development you are now experiencing."

"And what is my nature?" said Lothair.

"I wish you would tell me."

"Has not the divine Theodora told you?"

"She has told me many things, but not that."

"How, then, could I know," said the princess, "if she has not discovered it?"

"But perhaps she has discovered it," said Lothair.

"Oh! then she would tell you," said the princess, "for she is the soul of truth."

"But she is also the soul of kindness, and she might wish to spare my feelings."

"Well, that is very modest, and I dare say not affected. For there is no man, however gifted, even however conceited, who has any real confidence in himself until he has acted."

"Well, we shall soon act," said Lothair, "and then I suppose I shall know my nature."

"In time," said the princess, "and with the continued inspiration of friendship."

"But you too are a great friend of Theodora?"

"Although a woman, I see you are laughing at female friendships, and, generally speaking, there is foundation for the general sneer. I will own, for my part, I have every female weakness, and in excess. I am vain, I am curious, I am jealous, and I am envious; but I adore Theodora. I reconcile my feelings toward her and my disposition in this way. It is not friendship—it is worship. And indeed there are moments when I sometimes think she is one of those beautiful divinities that we once worshipped in this land, and who, when they listened to our prayers, at least vouchsafed that our country should not be the terrible wilderness that you crossed this day."

In the mean time Colonna, with folded arms and eyes fixed on the ground, was listening to Theodora.

"Thus you see," she continued, "it comes to this—Rome can only be freed by the Romans. He looks upon the secret societies of his own country as he does upon universal suffrage—a wild beast, and dangerous, but which may be watched and tamed and managed by the police. He listens, but he plays with them. He temporizes. At the bottom of his heart, his Italian blood despises the Gauls. It must be something deeper and more touching than this. Rome must appeal to him, and in the ineffable name."

"It has been uttered before," said Colonna, looking up at his companion, "and—"

And he hesitated.

"And in vain you would say," said Theodora. "Not so. There was a martyrdom, but the blood of Felice baptized the new birth of Italian life. But I am not thinking of bloodshed. Had it not been for the double intrigues of the Savoyards it need not then have been shed. We bear him no ill-will—at least not now—and we can make great offers. Make them. The revolution in Gaul is over a mimicry of Italian thought and life. Their great affair of the last century, which they have so marred and muddled, would never have occurred had it not been for Tuscan reform; 1848 was the echo of our societies; and the Seine will never be disturbed if the Tiber flows unruffled. Let him consent to Roman freedom, and 'Madre Natura' will guarantee him against Lutetian barricades."

"It is only the offer of Mary-Anno in another form," said Colonna.

"Guarantee the dynasty," said Theodora. "There is the point. He can trust us. Emperors and kings break treaties without remorse, but he knows that what is registered by the most ancient power in the world is sacred."

"Can republicans guarantee dynasties?" said Colonna, shaking his head.

"Why what is a dynasty, when we are dealing with eternal things? The casualties of life compared with infinite space? Rome is eternal. Centuries of the most degrading and foreign priestcraft—enervating rites brought in by Heliogabalus and the Syrian emperors—have failed to destroy her. Dynasties! Why, even in our dark servitude we have seen Merovingian and Carlovingian
kings, and Capets, and Valois, and Bourbons, and now Bonapartes. They have disappeared, and will disappear like Oregoix and the dynasties of the time of Caesar. What we want is Rome free. Do not you see that every thing has been preparing for that event? This monstrous masquerade of United Italy—what is it but an initiatory ceremony to prove that Italy without Rome is a series of provinces? Establish the Roman republic, and the Roman race will, as before, conquer them in detail. And, when the Italians are thus really united, what will become of the Gauls? Why, the first Bonaparte said that if Italy were really united the Gauls would have no chance. And he was a good judge of such things.

"What would you have me do, then?" said Colonna.

"See him—see him at once. Say everything that I have said, and say it better. His disposition is with us. Convenience, all political propriety, counsel and would justify his abstinence. A return to Rome would seem weak, fitful, capricious, and would prove that his previous retirement was ill-considered and ill-informed. It would disturb and alarm Europe. But you have, nevertheless, to fight against great odds. It is 'MADRE NATURA' against St. Peter's. Never was the abomination of the world so active as at present. It is in the very throes of its fall despair. To save itself it would poison in the Eucharist."

"And if I fail?" said Colonna.

"You will not fail. On the whole, his interest lies on our side."

"The sacerdotal influences are very strong there. When the calculation of interest is fine, a word, a glance, sometimes a sigh, a tear, may have a fatal effect."

"All depends upon him," said Theodore. "If he were to disappear from the stage, interference would be impossible."

"But he is on the stage, and apparently will remain."

"A single life should not stand between Rome and freedom."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Romolo Colonna should go to Paris and free his country."
Marseilles had telegraphed to his government both when the first regiment was on board and when the last had embarked. Copies of these telegrams had been forwarded instantly by a secret friend to the volunteers on the southern frontier.

When Theodora heard this news she said nothing, but, turning pale, she quitted the group round the general and hastened to her own tent. She told her attendant, the daughter of the custom-house officer at Narni, and a true child of the mountains, that no one must approach her, not even Colonel Campian, and the girl sat without the tent at its entrance, dressed in her many-colored garments, with fiery eyes and square white teeth, and her dark hair braided with gold coins and covered with a long white kerchief of perfect cleanliness; and she had a poniard at her side and a revolver in her hand, and she would have used both weapons sooner than that her mistress should be disobeyed.

Alone in her tent, Theodora fell upon her knees, and, lifting up her hands to heaven and bowing her head to the earth, she said: "O God! whom I have ever worshipped, God of justice and of truth, receive the agony of my soul!"

And on the earth she remained for hours in despair.

Night came, and it brought no solace, and the day returned, but to her it brought no light. Theodora was no longer seen. The soul of the camp seemed extinct. The mien of majesty that ennobled all; the winning smile that rewarded the rifleman at his practice and the sapper at his toil; the inciting word that reanimated the recruit and recalled to the veteran the glories of Sicilian struggles—all vanished—all seemed spiritless and dull, and the armorer clinked his forge as if he were the heartless hirling of a king.

In this state of moral discomfiture there was one person who did not lose his head, and this was the general. Calm, collected, and critical, he surveyed the situation and indicated the possible contingencies. "Our best, if not our only, chance," he said to Colonel Campian, "is this—that the Italian army now gathered in force upon the frontier should march to Rome and arrive there before the French. Whatever then happens, we shall at least get rid of the great imposture, but in all probability the French and Italians will fight. In that case I shall join the Savoyards, and in the confusion we may do some business yet."

"This embarkation," said the colonel, "explains the gathering of the Italians on the frontier. They must have foreseen this event at Florence. They never can submit to another French occupation. It would upset their throne. The question is, who will be at Rome first."

"Just so," said the general; "and as it is an affair upon which all depends, and is entirely beyond my control, I think I shall now take a nap." So saying, he turned into his tent, and, in five minutes, this brave and exact man, but in whom the muscular development far exceeded the nervous, was slumbering without a dream.

Civita Vecchia was so near at hand, and the scouts of the general were so numerous and able, that he soon learned the French had not yet arrived, and another day elapsed and still no news of the French. But, on the afternoon of the following day, the startling but authentic information arrived, that, after the French army having embarked and remained two days in port, the original orders had been countermanded, and the troops had absolutely disembarked.

There was a cheer in the camp when the news was known, and Theodora started from her desolation, surprised that there could be in such a scene a sound of triumph. Then there was another cheer, and though she did not move, but remained listening and leaning on her arm, the light returned to her eyes. The cheer was repeated, and there were steps about her tent. She caught the voice of Lothair speaking to her attendant, and adjuring her to tell her mistress immediately that there was good news, and that the French troops had disembarked. Then he heard her husband calling Theodora.

The camp became a scene of excitement and festivity which, in general, only succeeds some signal triumph. The troops lived always in the air, except in the hours
of night, when the atmosphere of the mountains in the late autumn is dangerous. At present they formed groups and parties in the vicinity of the tents; there was their gay canteen and there their humorous kitchen. The man of the Gulf with his rich Venetian banter and the Sicilian with his searamouch tricks got on very well with the gentle and polished Tuscan, and could amuse without offending the high Roman soul; but there were some quips and cranks and sometimes some anties which were not always relished by the simpler men from the islands, and the offended eye of a Corsican sometimes seemed to threaten “vendetta.”

About sunset, Colonel Campian led forth Theodora. She was in female attire, and her long hair, restrained only by a fillet, reached nearly to the ground. Her Olympian brow seemed distended; a phosphoric light glittered in her Hellenic eyes; a deep pink spot burnt upon each of those cheeks usually so immaculately fair.

The general and the chief officers gathered round her with their congratulations, but she would visit all the quarters. She spoke to the men in all the dialects of that land of many languages. The men of the Gulf, in general of gigantic stature, dropped their merry Venetian stories and fell down on their knees and kissed the hem of her garment; the Scaramouch forgot his tricks, and wept as he would to the Madonna; Tuscany and Rome made speeches worthy of the Arno and the Forum; and the Corsicans and the islanders unsheathed their poniards and brandished them in the air, which is their mode of denoting affectionate devotion. As the night advanced, the crescent moon glittering above the Apennine, Theodora, attended by the whole staff, having visited all the troops, stopped at the chief fire of the camp, and in a voice which might have maddened nations sang the hymn of Roman liberty, the whole army ranged in ranks along the valley joining in the solemn and triumphant chorus.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Thus exaltation of feeling in the camp did not evaporate. All felt that they were on the eve of some great event, and that the hour was at hand. And it was in this state of enthusiasm that couriers arrived with the intelligence that Garibaldi had escaped from Caprera, that he had reached Nerola in safety, and was in command of the assembled forces; and that the general was, without loss of time, to strike his camp, join the main body at a given place, and then march to Rome.

The breaking-up of the camp was as the breaking-up of a long frost and the first scent of spring. There was a brightness in every man’s face and a gay elasticity in all their movements. But when the order of the day informed them that they must prepare for instant combat, and that in eight-and-forty hours they would probably be in face of the enemy, the hearts of the young recruits fluttered with strange excitement, and the veterans nodded to each other with grim delight.

It was nearly midnight when the troops quitted the valley, through a defile, in an opposite direction to the pass by which they had entered it. It was a bright night. Colonel Campian had the command of the division in advance, which was five hundred strong. After the defile, the country, though hilly, was comparatively open, and here the advanced guard was to halt until the artillery and cavalry had effected the passage, and this was the most laborious and difficult portion of the march, but all was well considered, and all went right. The artillery and cavalry, by sunrise, had joined the advanced guard, who were bivouacking in the rocky plain, and about noon the main columns of the infantry began to deploy from the heights, and, in a short time, the whole force was in the field. Soon after this some of the skirmishers, who had been sent forward, returned, and reported the enemy in force, and in a strong position, commanding the intended route of the invading force. On this the general resolved to halt for a few
hours, and rest and refresh the troops, and to recommence their march after sunset, so that, without effort, they might be in the presence of the enemy by dawn.

Lothair had been separated from Theodora during this, to him, novel and exciting scene. She had accompanied her husband, but, when the whole force advanced in battle array, the general had desired that she should accompany the staff. They advanced through the night, and by dawn they were fairly in the open country. In the distance, and in the middle of the rough and undulating plain, was a round hill with an ancient city, for it was a bishop's see, built all about and over it. It would have looked like a gigantic beehive, had it not been for a long convent on the summit, flanked by some stone-pines, as we see in the pictures of Gaspar and Claude.

Between this city and the invading force, though not in a direct line, was posted the enemy in a strong position; their right wing protected by one of the mounds common in the plain, and their left backed by an olive-wood of considerable extent, and which grew on the last rocky spur of the mountains. They were, therefore, as regards the plain, on commanding ground. The strength of the two forces was not unequal, and the papal troops were not to be despised, consisting, among others, of a detachment of the legion of Antibes and the Zouaves. They had artillery, which was well posted.

The general surveyed the scene, for which he was not unprepared. Disposing his troops in positions in which they were as much protected as possible from the enemy's fire, he opened upon them a fierce and continuous cannonade, while he ordered Colonel Campian and eight hundred men to fall back among the hills, and, following a circuitous path, which had been revealed by a shepherd, gain the spur of the mountains, and attack the enemy in their rear through the olive-wood. It was calculated that this movement, if successful, would require about three hours, and the general, for that period of the time, had to occupy the enemy and his own troops with what were, in reality, feint attacks.

When the calculated time had elapsed, the general became anxious, and his glass was never from his eye. He was posted on a convenient ridge, and the wind, which was high this day from the sea, frequently cleared the field from the volumes of smoke; so his opportunities of observation were good. But the three hours passed, and there was no sign of the approach of Campian, and he ordered Sarano, with his division, to advance toward the mound and occupy the attention of the right wing of the enemy; but, very shortly after Lothair had carried this order, and four hours having elapsed, the general observed some confusion in the left wing of the enemy, and, instantly countermanding the order, commanded a general attack in line. The troops charged with enthusiasm, but they were encountered with a resolution as determined. At first they carried the mound, broke the enemy's centre, and were mixed up with their great guns; but the enemy fiercely rallied, and the invaders were repulsed. The papal troops retained their position, and their opponents were in disorder on the plain, and a little dismayed. It was at this moment that Theodora rushed forward, and, waving a sword in one hand, and in the other the standard of the republic, exclaimed, "Brothers, to Rome!"

This sight inflamed their faltering hearts, which, after all, were rather confounded than dismayed. They formed and rallied round her, and charged with renewed energy at the very moment that Campian had brought the force of his division on the enemy's rear. A panic came over the papal troops, thus doubly assailed, and their rout was complete. They retreated in the utmost disorder to Viterbo, which they abandoned that night, and hurried to Rome.

At the last moment, when the victory was no longer doubtful, and all were in full retreat or in full pursuit, a Zouave, in wantonness, firing his weapon before he threw it away, sent a random-shot which struck Theodora, and she fell. Lothair, who had never left her during the battle, was at her side in a moment, and a soldier, who had also marked the fatal shot; and, strange to say, so hot and keen was the pursuit, that,
though a moment before they seemed to be in the very thick of the strife, they almost instantaneously found themselves alone, or rather with no companions than the wounded near them. She looked at Lothair, but, at first, could not speak. She seemed stunned, but soon murmured: "Go! go! you are wanted!"

At this moment the general rode up with some of his staff. His countenance was elate, and his eye sparkled with fire. But, catching the figure of Lothair kneeling on the field, he reined in his charger and said, "What is this?" Then looking more closely, he instantly dismounted, and muttering to himself, "This mars the victory," he was at Theodora's side.

A slight smile came over her when she recognized the general, and she faintly pressed his hand, and then said again: "Go, go; you are all wanted."

"None of us are wanted. The day is won; we must think of you."

"Is it won?" she murmured.

"Complete."

"I die content."

"Who talks of death?" said the general.

"This is a wound, but I have had some worse. What we must think of now are remedies. I passed an ambulance this moment. Run for it," he said to his aide-de-camp. "We must stanch the wound at once; but it is only a mile to the city, and then we shall find everything, for we were expected. I will ride on, and there shall be proper attendance ready before you arrive. You will conduct our friend to the city," he said to Lothair, "and be of good courage, as I am."

CHAPTER LIX.

The troops were rushing through the gates of the city when the general rode up. There was a struggling and stifling crowd; cheers and shrieks. It was that moment of wild fruition, when the master is neither recognized nor obeyed. It is not easy to take a bone out of a dog's mouth; nevertheless, the presence of the general in time prevailed, something like order was established, and, before the ambulance could arrive, a guard had been appointed to receive it, and the ascent to the monastery, where a quarter was prepared, kept clear.

During the progress to the city Theodora never spoke, but she seemed stunned rather than suffering; and once, when Lothair, who was walking by her side, caught her glance with his sorrowful and anxious face, she put forth her hand and pressed his.

The ascent to the convent was easy, and the advantages of air and comparative tranquillity which the place offered counterbalanced the risk of postponing, for a very brief space, the examination of the wound.

They laid her on their arrival on a large bed, without poles or canopy, in a lofty whitewashed room of considerable dimensions, clean and airy, with high, open windows. There was no furniture in the room except a chair, a table, and a crucifix. Lothair took her in his arms and laid her on the bed; and the common soldier who had hitherto assisted him, a giant in stature, with a beard a foot long, stood by the bedside crying like a child. The chief surgeon almost at the same moment arrived with an aide-de-camp of the general, and her faithful female attendant, and in a few minutes her husband, himself wounded and covered with dust.

The surgeon at once requested that all should withdraw except her devoted maid, and they waited his report without, in that deep sad silence which will not despair, and yet dares not hope.

When the wound had been examined and probed and dressed, Theodora in a faint voice said, "Is it desperate?"

"Not desperate," said the surgeon, "but serious. All depends upon your perfect tranquillity—of mind as well as body."

"Well I am here and cannot move; and as for my mind, I am not only serene, but happy."

"Then we shall get through this," said the surgeon, encouragingly.

"I do not like you to stay with me," said Theodora. "There are other sufferers besides myself."

"My orders are not to quit you," said
the surgeon, "but I can be of great use within these walls. I shall return when the restorative has had its effect. But remember, if I be wanted, I am always here."

Soon after this Theodora fell into a gentle slumber, and after two hours woke refreshed. The countenance of the surgeon when he again visited her was less troubled; it was hopeful.

The day was now beginning to decline; notwithstanding the scenes of tumult and violence near at hand, all was here silent; and the breeze, which had been strong during the whole day, but which blew from the sea, and was very soft, played gratefully upon the pale countenance of the sufferer. Suddenly she said, "What is that?"

And they answered and said, "We heard nothing."

"I hear the sound of great guns," said Theodora.

And they listened, and in a moment both the surgeon and the maid heard the sound of distant ordinance.

"The liberator is at hand," said the maid.

"I dare say," said the surgeon.

"No," said Theodora, looking distressed. "The sounds do not come from his direction. Go and see, Dolores; ask, and tell me what are these sounds."

The surgeon was sitting by her side, and occasionally touching her pulse, or wiping the slight foam from her brow, when Dolores returned and said, "Lady, the sounds are the great guns of Civita Vecchia."

A deadly change came over the countenance of Theodora, and the surgeon looked alarmed. He would have given her some restorative, but she refused it. "No, kind friend," she said; "it is finished. I have just received a wound more fatal than the shot in the field this morning. The French are at Rome. Tell me, kind friend, how long do you think I may live?"

The surgeon felt her pulse; his look was gloomy. "In such a case as yours," he said, "the patient is the best judge."

"I understand," she said. "Send, then, at once for my husband."

He was at hand, for his wound had been dressed in the convent, and he came to Theodora with his arm in a sling, but with the attempt of a cheerful visage.

In the mean time, Lothair, after having heard the first, and by no means hopeless, bulletin of the surgeon, had been obliged to leave the convent to look after his men, and having seen them in quarters and made his report to the general, he obtained permission to return to the convent and ascertain the condition of Theodora. Arrived there, he heard that she had had refreshing slumber, and that her husband was now with her, and a ray of hope lighted up the darkness of his soul. He was walking up and down the refectory of the convent with that sickening restlessness which attends impending and yet uncertain sorrow, when Colonel Campian entered the apartment and beckoned to him.

There was an expression in his face which appalled Lothair, and he was about to inquire after Theodora, when his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and he could not speak. The Colonel shook his head, and said in a low, hollow voice, "She wishes to see you, and alone. Come."

Theodora was sitting in the bed, propped up by cushions, when Lothair entered, and, as her wound was internal, there was no evidence of her sufferings. The distressful expression of her face, when she heard the great guns of Civita Vecchia, had passed away. It was serious, but it was serene. She bade her maid leave the chamber, and then she said to Lothair, "It is the last time I shall speak to you, and I wish that we should be alone. There is something much on my mind at this moment, and you can relieve it."

"Adored being," murmured Lothair with streaming eyes, "there is no wish of yours that I will not fulfil."

"I know your life, for you have told it me, and you are true. I know your nature; it is gentle and brave, but perhaps too susceptible. I wished it to be susceptible only of the great and good. Mark me—I have a vague but strong conviction that there will be another and a more powerful attempt to gain you to the Church of Rome. If I have ever been to you, as you have sometimes said, an object of kind thoughts
session of information that an insurrection was immediate, and that the city would be fired in four different quarters.

The pope had escaped from the Vatican to the Castle of St. Angelo, where he was secure, and where his courage could be sustained by the presence of the Noble Guard, with their swords always drawn. The six-score of monsignori, who in their different offices form what is styled the court of Rome, had either accompanied his holiness, or prudently secreted themselves in the strongest palaces and convents at their command. Later in the day news arrived of the escape of Garibaldi from Caprera; he was said to be marching on the city, and only five-and-twenty miles distant. There appeared another proclamation from the Revolutionary Committee, mysteriously posted under the very noses of the guards and police, postponing the insurrection till the arrival of the liberator.

The papal cause seemed hopeless. There was a general feeling throughout the city and all classes, that this time it was to be an affair of Alaric or Genseric, or the Constable of Bourbon; no negotiations, no compromises, no conventions, but slaughter, havoc, a great judicial devastation, that was to extirpate all signs and memories of Medieval and Semitic Rome, and restore and renovate the inheritance of the true offspring of the she-wolf. The very aspect of the place itself was sinister. Whether it were the dulness of the dark sky, or the crown of MADEE NATURA herself, but the old Seven Hills seemed to look askance. The haughty capitol, impatient of its chapels, sighed once more for triumphs; and the proud Palatine, remembering the Caesars, glanced with imperial contempt on the palaces of the papal princelings that, in the course of ignominious ages, had been constructed out of the exhaustless womb of its still sovereign ruin. The Jews in their quarter spoke nothing, but exchanged a curious glance, as if to say, "Has it come at last? And will they indeed serve her as they served Sion?"

This dreadful day at last passed, followed by as dreadful a night, and then another day equally gloomy, equally silent, equally
panic-stricken. Even insurrection would have been a relief amid the horrible and wearing suspense. On the third day the government made some wild arrests of the wrong persons, and then came out a fresh proclamation from the Revolutionary Committee, directing the Romans to make no move until the advanced guard of Garibaldi had appeared upon Monte Mario. About this time the routed troops of the pope arrived in confusion from Viterbo, and of course extenuated their discomfiture by exaggerating the strength of their opponents. According to them, they had encountered not less than ten thousand men, who now, having joined the still greater force of Garibaldi, were in full march on the city.

The members of the papal party who showed the greatest spirit and the highest courage at this trying conjuncture were the Roman ladies and their foreign friends. They scraped lint for the troops as incessantly as they offered prayers to the Virgin. Some of them were trained nurses, and they were training others to tend the sick and wounded. They organized a hospital service, and when the wounded arrived from Viterbo, notwithstanding the rumors of incendiaryism and massacre, they came forth from their homes, and proceeded in companies, with no male attendants but armed men, to the discharge of their self-appointed public duties. There were many foreigners in the papal ranks, and the sympathies and services of the female visitors to Rome were engaged for their countrymen. Princesses of France and Flanders might be seen by the tassel-beds of many a suffering soldier of Dauphiné and Brabant; but there were numerous subjects of Queen Victoria in the papal ranks—some Englishmen, several Scotchmen, and many Irish. For them the English ladies had organized a special service. Lady St. Jerome, with unflagging zeal, presided over this department; and the superior of the sisterhood of mercy, that shrank from no toil, and feared no danger in the fulfilment of those sacred duties of pious patriots, was Miss Arundel.

She was leaning over the bed of one who had been cut down in the olive-wood by a sabre of Campian's force, when a peal of artillery was heard. She thought that hour had arrived, and the assault had commenced.

"Most holy Mary!" she exclaimed, "sustain me."

There was another peal, and it was repeated, and again and again at regular intervals.

"That is not a battle, it is a salute," murmured the wounded soldier.

And he was right; it was the voice of the great guns telling that the French had arrived.

The consternation of the Revolutionary Committee, no longer sustained by Colonna, absent in France, was complete. Had the advanced guard of Garibaldi been in sight, it might still have been the wisest course to rise; but Monte Mario was not yet peopled by them, and an insurrection against the papal troops, reanimated by the reported arrival of the French, and increased in numbers by the fugitives from Viterbo, would have been certainly a rash and probably a hopeless effort. And so, in the midst of confused and hesitating councils, the first division of the French force arrived at the gates of Rome, and marched into the gloomy and silent city.

Since the interference of St. Peter and St. Paul against Alaric, the papacy had never experienced a more miraculous interposition in its favor. Shortly after this the wind changed, and the sky became serene; a sunbeam played on the flashing cross of St. Peter's; the Pope left the Castle of Angelo, and returned to the Quirinal; the Noble Guard sheathed their puissant blades; the sixscore of monsignori reappeared in all their busy haunts and stately offices; and the court of Rome, no longer despairing of the republic, and with a spirit worthy of the Senate after Cannae, ordered the whole of its forces into the field to combat its invaders, with the prudent addition, in order to insure a triumph, of a brigade of French infantry armed with chassepots.

Garibaldi, who was really at hand, hearing of these events, fell back on Monte Rondo, about fifteen miles from the city, and took up a strong position. He was soon attacked by his opponents, and defeated with
considerable slaughter, and forced to fly. The papal troops returned to Rome in triumph, but with many wounded. The Roman ladies and their friends resumed their noble duties with enthusiasm. The ambulances were apportioned to the different hospitals, and the services of all were required. Our own countrymen had suffered severely, but the skill and energy and gentle care of Clare Arundel and her companions only increased with the greater calls upon their beautiful and sublime virtue.

A woman came to Miss Arundel and told her that, in one of the ambulances, was a young man whom they could not make out. He was severely wounded, and had now swooned; but they had reason to believe he was an Englishman. Would she see him and speak to him? And she went.

The person who had summoned her was a woman of much beauty, not an uncommon quality in Rome, and of some majesty of mien, as little rare in that city. She was said, at the time when some inquiry was made, to be Maria Serafina de Angelis, the wife of a tailor in the Ripetta.

The ambulance was in the court-yard of the hospital of the Santissima Trinita di Pellegrini. The woman pointed to it, and then went away. There was only one person in the ambulance; the rest had been taken into the hospital, but he had been left because he was in a swoon, and they were trying to restore him. Those around the ambulance made room for Miss Arundel as she approached, and she beheld a young man, covered with the stains of battle, and severely wounded; but his countenance was uninjured though insensible. His eyes were closed, and his auburn hair fell in clusters on his white forehead. The sister of mercy touched the pulse to ascertain whether there yet was life, but, in the very act, her own frame became agitated, and the color left her cheek, as she recognized—Lothair.

CHAPTER LXI.

When Lothair in some degree regained consciousness, he found himself in bed. The chamber was lofty and dim, and had once been splendid. Thoughtfulness had invested it with an air of comfort rare under Italian roofs. The fagots sparkled on the hearth, the light from the windows was veiled with hangings, and the draughts from the tall doors guarded against by screens. And by his bedside there were beautiful flowers, and a crucifix, and a silver bell.

Where was he? He looked up at the velvet canopy above, and then at the pictures that covered the walls, but there was no familiar aspect. He remembered nothing since he was shot down in the field of Mentana, and even that incoherently.

And there had been another battle before that, followed by a catastrophe still more dreadful. When had all this happened, and where? He tried to move his bandaged form, but he had no strength, and his mind seemed weaker than his frame. But he was soon sensible that he was not alone. A veiled figure gently lifted him, and another one refreshed his pillows. He spoke, or tried to speak, but one of them pressed her finger to her shrouded lips, and he willingly relapsed into the silence which he had hardly strength enough to break.

And sometimes these veiled and gliding ministers brought him sustenance and sometimes remedies, and he complied with all their suggestions, but with absolute listless; and sometimes a coarser hand interfered, and sometimes he caught a countenance that was not concealed, but was ever strange. He had a vague impression that they examined and dressed his wounds, and arranged his bandages; but whether he really had wounds, and whether he were or were not bandaged, he hardly knew, and did not care to know. He was not capable of thought, and memory was an effort under which he always broke down. Day after day he remained silent and almost motionless alike in mind and body. He had a vague feeling that, after some great sorrows, and some great trials, he was in stillness and in safety; and he had an indefinite mysterious sentiment of gratitude to some unknown power, that had cherished him in his dark calamities, and poured balm and oil into his wounds.

It was in this mood of apathy that, one
evening, there broke upon his ear low but beautiful voices performing the evening service of the Church. His eye glistened, his heart was touched by the vesper spell. He listened with rapt attention to the sweet and sacred strains, and when they died away he felt depressed. Would they ever sound again?

Sooner than he could have hoped, for, when he woke in the morning from his slumbers, which, strange to say, were always disturbed, for the mind and the memory seemed to work at night though in fearful and exhausting chaos, the same divine melodies that had soothed him in the eve, now sounded in the glad and grateful worship of matin praise.

"I have heard the voice of angels," he murmured to his veiled attendant.

The vesper and the matin hours became at once the epochs of his day. He was ever thinking of them, and soon was thinking of the feelings which their beautiful services celebrate and express. His mind seemed no longer altogether a blank, and the religious sentiment was the first that returned to his exhausted heart.

"There will be a requiem to-day," whispered one of his veiled attendants.

A requiem! a service for the dead; a prayer for their peace and rest! And who was dead? The bright, the matchless one, the spell and fascination of his life! Was it possible? Could she be dead, who seemed vitality in its consummate form? Was there ever such a being as Theodora? And if there were no Theodora on earth, why should one think of any thing but heaven?

The sounds came floating down the chamber till they seemed to cluster round his brain; sometimes solemn, sometimes thrilling, sometimes the divine pathos melting the human heart with celestial sympathy and heavenly solace. The tears fell fast from his agitated vision, and he sank back exhausted, almost insensible, on his pillow.

"The Church has a heart for all our joys and all our sorrows, and for all our hopes, and all our fears," whispered a veiled attendant, as she bathed his temples with fragrant waters.

Though the condition of Lothair had at first seemed desperate, his youthful and vigorous frame had enabled him to rally, and, with time and the infinite solicitude which he received, his case was not without hope. But, though his physical cure was somewhat advanced, the prostration of his mind seemed susceptible of no relief. The services of the Church accorded with his depressed condition; they were the only events of his life, and he cherished them. His attendants now permitted and even encouraged him to speak; but he seemed entirely inquisitive and indifferent. Sometimes they read to him, and he listened, but he never made remarks. The works which they selected had a religious or ecclesiastical bias, even while they were imaginative; and it seemed difficult not to be interested by the ingenious fancy by which it was worked out, that every thing that was true and sacred in heaven had its symbol and significance in the qualities and accidents of earth.

After a month passed in this manner, the surgeons having announced that Lothair might now prepare to rise from his bed, a veiled attendant said to him one day, "There is a gentleman here who is a friend of yours, and who would like to see you. And perhaps you would like to see him also for other reasons, for you must have much to say to God after all that you have suffered. And he is a most holy man."

"I have no wish to see any one. Are you sure he is not a stranger?" asked Lothair.

"He is in the next room," said the attendant. "He has been here throughout your illness, conducting our services; often by your bedside when you were asleep, and always praying for you."

The veiled attendant drew back and waved her hand, and some one glided forward, and said in a low, soft voice, "You have not forgotten me?"

And Lothair beheld Monsignore Catesby. "It is a long time since we met," said Lothair, looking at him with some scrutiny, and then all interest died away, and he turned away his vague and wandering eyes.

"But you know me?"

"I know not where I am, and I but
faintly comprehend what has happened," murmured Lothair.

"You are among friends," said the monsignore, in tones of sympathy. "What has happened," he added, with an air of mystery, not unmixed with a certain expression of ecstasy in his glance, "must be reserved for other times, when you are stronger, and can grapple with such high themes."

"How long have I been here?" inquired Lothair, dreamily.

"It is a month since the Annunciation."

"What Annunciation?"

"Hush!" said the monsignore, and he raised his finger to his lip. "We must not talk of these things—at least at present. No doubt, the same blessed person that saved you from the jaws of death is at this moment guarding over your recovery and guiding it; but we do not deserve, nor does the Church expect, perpetual miracles. We must avail ourselves, under Divine sanction, of the beneficial tendencies of Nature; and in your case her operations must not be disturbed at this moment by any excitement, except, indeed, the glow of gratitude for celestial aid, and the inward joy which must permeate the being of any one who feels that he is among the most favored of men."

From this time Monsignore Catesby scarcely ever quitted Lothair. He hailed Lothair in the morn, and parted from him at night with a blessing; and in the interval Catesby devoted his whole life, and the inexhaustible resources of his fine and skilled intelligence, to alleviate or amuse the existence of his companion. Sometimes he conversed with Lothair, adroitly taking the chief burden of the talk; and yet, whether it were bright narrative or lively dissertation, never seeming to lecture or hold forth, but relieving the monologue, when expedient, by an interesting inquiry, which he was always ready in due time to answer himself, or softening the instruction by the playfulness of his mind and manner. Sometimes he read to Lothair, and attuned the mind of his charge to the true spiritual note by melting passages from A Kempis or Chrysostom. Then he would bring a port-

folio of wondrous drawings by the medieval masters, of saints and seraphs, and accustom the eye and thought of Lothair to the forms and fancies of the court of heaven.

One day, Lothair, having risen from his bed for the first time, and lying on a sofa in an adjoining chamber to that in which he had been so long confined, the monsignore seated himself by the side of Lothair, and, opening a portfolio, took out a drawing and held it before Lothair, observing his countenance with a glance of peculiar scrutiny.

"Well!" said Catesby, after some little pause, as if awaiting a remark from his companion.

"Tis beautiful!" said Lothair. "Is it by Raffaelle?"

"No; by Fra Bartolomeo. But the countenance, do you remember ever having met such a one?"

Lothair shook his head. Catesby took out another drawing, the same subject, the Blessed Virgin. "By Giulio," said the monsignore, and he watched the face of Lothair, but it was listless.

Then he showed Lothair another, and another, and another. At last he held before him one which was really by Raffaelle, and by which Lothair was evidently much moved. His eye lit up, a blush suffused his pale cheek, he took the drawing himself, and held it before his gaze with a trembling hand.

"Yes," I remember this," he murmured, for it was one of those faces of Greek beauty which the great painter not infrequently caught up at Rome. The monsignore looked gently round and waved his hand, and immediately arose the hymn to the Virgin in subdued strains of exquisite melody.

On the next morning, when Lothair woke, he found on the table, by his side, the drawing of the Virgin in a sliding frame.

About this time the monsignore began to accustom Lothair to leave his apartment, and, as he was not yet permitted to walk, Catesby introduced what he called an English chair, in which Lothair was enabled to survey a little the place which had been to him a refuge and a home. It seemed a
building of vast size, raised round an inner court with arcades and windows, and, in the higher story where he resided, an apparently endless number of chambers and galleries. One morning, in their perambulations, the monsignore unlocked the door of a covered way which had no light but from a lamp which guided their passage. The opposite door at the end of this covered way opened into a church, but one of a character different from any which Lothair had yet entered.

It had been during the latter half of the sixteenth century by Vignola, when, under the influence of the great Pagan revival, the Christian church began to assume the character of an Olympian temple. A central painted cupola of large but exquisite proportions, supported by pilasters with gilded capitals, and angels of white marble springing from golden brackets; walls incrusted with rare materials of every tint, and altars supported by serpentine columns of agate and alabaster; a blaze of pictures, and statues, and precious stones, and precious metals, denoted one of the chief temples of the sacred brotherhood of Jesus, raised when the great order had recognized that the views of primitive and mediaeval Christianity, founded on the humility of man, were not in accordance with the age of confidence in human energy, in which they were destined to rise, and which they were determined to direct.

Guided by Catesby, and leaning on a staff, Lothair gained a gorgeous side chapel in which mass was celebrating; the air was rich with incense, and all heaven seemed to open in the ministrations of a seraphic choir. Crushed by his great calamities, both physical and moral, Lothair sometimes felt that he could now be content if the rest of his life could flow away amid this celestial fragrance and these gushing sounds of heavenly melody. And absorbed in these feelings it was not immediately observed by him that on the altar, behind the dazzling blaze of tapers, was a picture of the Virgin, and identically the same countenance as that he had recognized with emotion in the drawing of Raffaello.

It revived perplexing memories which agitated him, thoughts on which it seemed his brain had not now strength enough to dwell, and yet with which it now seemed inevitable for him to grapple. The congregation was not very numerous, and, when it broke up, several of them lingered behind and whispered to the monsignore, and then, after a little time, Catesby approached Lothair and said: "There are some here who would wish to kiss your hand, or even touch the hem of your garments. It is troublesome, but natural, considering all that has occurred and that this is the first time, perhaps, that they have met any one who has been so favored."

"Favored?" said Lothair; "Am I favored? It seems to me I am the most forlorn of men—if even I am that."

"Hush!" said the monsignore, "we must not talk of these things at present;" and he motioned to some, who approached and contemplated Lothair with blended curiosity and reverence.

These visits of Lothair to the beautiful church of the Jesuits became of daily occurrence, and often happened several times on the same day; indeed they formed the only incident which seemed to break his listlessness. He became interested in the change and variety of the services, in the persons and characters of the officiating priests. The soft manners of these fathers, their intelligence in the performance of their offices, their obliging carriage, and the unaffected concern with which all he said or did seemed to inspire them, won upon him unconsciously. The church had become his world; and his sympathies, if he still had sympathies, seemed confined to those within its walls.

In the mean time his physical advancement though slow was gradual, and had hitherto never been arrested. He could even walk a little alone, though artificially supported, and rambled about the halls and galleries full of a prodigious quantity of pictures, from the days of Raffael Sanzio to those of Raffael Mengs.

"The doctors think now we might try a little drive," said the monsignore one morning. "The rains have ceased and refreshed every thing. To-day is like the burst of
A SOLITARY SPOT.

CHAPTER LXII.

The recognition of Rome by Lothair evinced not only a consciousness of locality, but an interest in it not before exhibited; and the monsignore soon after seized the opportunity of drawing the mind of his companion to the past, and feeling how far he now realized the occurrences that immediately preceded his arrival in the city. But Lothair would not dwell on them. "I wish to think of nothing," he said, "that happened before I entered this city: all I desire now is to know those to whom I am indebted for my preservation in a condition that seemed hopeless."

"There is nothing hopeless with Divine aid," said the monsignore; "but, humanly speaking, you are indebted for your preservation to English friends, long and intimately cherished. It is under their roof that you dwell, the Agostini palace, tenanted by Lord St. Jerome.

"Lord St. Jerome!" murmured Lothair to himself.

"And the ladies of his house are those who, only with some slight assistance from my poor self, tended you throughout your most desperate state, and when we sometimes almost feared that mind and body were alike wrecked."

"I have a dream of angels," said Lothair; "and sometimes I listened to heavenly voices that I seemed to have heard before."

"I am sure you have not forgotten the ladies of that house?" said Catesby, watching his countenance.

"No; one of them summoned me to meet her at Rome," murmured Lothair, "and I am here."

"That summons was divine," said Catesby, "and only the herald of the great event that was ordained and has since occurred. In this holy city, Miss Arundel must ever count as the most sanctified of her sex."

Lothair lapsed into silence, which sub-
sequently appeared to be meditation, for, when the carriage stopped, and the monsignore assisted him to alight, he said, "I must see Lord St. Jerome."

And, in the afternoon, with due and preparatory announcement, Lord St. Jerome waited on Lothair. The monsignore ushered him into the chamber, and, though he left them as it were alone, never quitted it. He watched them conversing, while he seemed to be arranging books and flowers; he hovered over the conference, dropping down on them at a critical moment, when the words became either languid or embarrassing. Lord St. Jerome was a hearty man, simple and high-bred. He addressed Lothair with all his former kindness, but with some degree of reserve, and even a dash of ceremony. Lothair was not insensible to the alteration in his manner, but could ascribe it to many causes. He was himself resolved to make an effort, when Lord St. Jerome arose to depart, and expressed the intention of Lady St. Jerome to wait on him on the morrow. "No, my dear lord," said Lothair; "to-morrow I make my first visit, and it shall be to my best friends. I would try to come this evening, but they will not be alone; and I must see them alone if it be only once."

This visit of the morrow rather pressed on the nervous system of Lothair. It was no slight enterprise, and called up many recollections. He brooded over his engagement during the whole evening, and his night was disturbed. His memory, long in a state of apathy, or carbed and controlled into indifference, seemed endowed with unnatural vitality, reproducing the history of his past life in rapid and exhausting tumult. All its scenes rose before him—Brentham, and Vaux, and Muriel—and closing with one absorbing spot, which, for a long time, it avoided, and in which all merged and ended—Belmont. Then came that anguish of the heart, which none can feel but those who in the youth of life have lost some one infinitely fascinating and dear, and the wild query why he, too, had not fallen on the fatal plain which had entombed all the hope and inspiration of his existence.

The interview was not so trying an incident as Lothair anticipated, as often under such circumstances occurs. Miss Arundel was not present; and, in the second place, although Lothair could not at first be insensible to a change in the manner of Lady St. Jerome, as well as in that of her lord, exhibiting as it did a degree of deference and ceremony which with her toward him were quite unusual, still the genial, gushing nature of this lively and enthusiastic woman, full of sympathy, soon asserted itself, and her heart was overflowing with sorrow for all his sufferings and gratitude for his escape.

"And, after all, she said, "every thing must have been ordained; and, without these trials, and even calamities, that great event could not have been brought about which must make all hail you as the most favored of men."

Lothair stared with a look of perplexity, and then said: "If I be the most favored of men, it is only because two angelic beings have deigned to minister to me in my sorrow, with a sweet devotion I can never forget, and, alas! can never repay."

CHAPTER LXIII.

Lothair was not destined to meet Clare Arundel alone or only in the presence of her family. He had acceded, after a short time, to the wish of Lady St. Jerome, and the advice of Monsignore Catesby, to wait on her in the evening, when Lady St. Jerome was always at home and never alone. Her rooms were the privileged resort of the very cream of Roman society and of those English who, like herself, had returned to the Roman Church. An Italian palace supplied an excellent occasion for the display of the peculiar genius of our countrywomen to make a place habitable. Beautiful carpets, baskets of flowers, and cases of ferns, and chairs which you could sit upon, tables covered with an infinity of toys—sparkling, useful, and fantastic—huge silken screens of rich color, and a profusion of light, produced a scene of combined comfort and bril-
lianey which made every one social who entered it, and seemed to give a bright and graceful turn even to the careless remarks of ordinary gossip.

Lady St. Jerome rose the moment her eye caught the entry of Lothair, and, advancing, received him with an air of ceremony, mixed, however, with an expression of personal devotion which was distressing to him, and singularly contrasted with the easy and genial receptions that he remembered at Vauxe. Then Lady St. Jerome led Lothair to her companion whom she had just quitted, and presented him to the Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento, a dame in whose veins, it was said, flowed both consular and pontifical blood of the rarest tint.

The Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento was the greatest lady in Rome; had still vast possessions—palaces and villas and vineyards and broad farms. Notwithstanding all that had occurred, she still looked upon the kings and emperors of the world as the mere servants of the pope, and on the old Roman nobility as still the conscript fathers of the world. Her other characteristic was superstition. So she was most distinguished by an irrepressible haughtiness and an illimitable credulity. The only softening circumstance was that, being in the hands of the Jesuits, her religion did not assume an ascetic or gloomy character. She was fond of society, and liked to show her wondrous jewels, which were still unrivalled, although she had presented his holiness in his troubles with a tiara of diamonds.

There were rumors that the Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento had on occasions treated even the highest nobility of England with a certain indifference; and all agreed that to laymen, however distinguished, her highness was not prone too easily to relax. But, in the present instance, it is difficult to convey a due conception of the graciousness of her demeanor when Lothair bent before her. She appeared even agitated, almost rose from her seat, and blushed through her rouge. Lady St. Jerome, guiding Lothair into her vacant seat, walked away.

"We shall never forget what you have done for us," said the princess to Lothair.

"I have done nothing," said Lothair, with a surprised air.

"Ah, that is so like gifted beings like you," said the princess. "They never will think they have done anything, even were they to save the world."

"You are too gracious, princess," said Lothair; "I have no claims to esteem which all must so value."

"Who has, if you have not?" rejoined the princess. "Yes, it is to you, and to you alone, that we must look. I am very impartial in what I say, for, to be frank, I have not been of those who believed that the great champion would rise without the patrimony of St. Peter. I am ashamed to say that I have even looked with jealousy on the energy that has been shown by individuals in other countries; but I now confess that I was in error. I cannot resist this manifestation. It was a privilege to have lived when it happened. All that we can do now is to cherish your favored life."

"You are too kind, madam," murmured the perplexed Lothair.

"I have done nothing," rejoined the princess, "and am ashamed that I have done nothing. But it is well for you, at this season, to be at Rome; and you cannot be better, I am sure, than under this roof. But, when the spring breaks, I hope you will honor me, by accepting for your use a villa which I have at Albano, and which, at that season, has many charms."

There were other Roman ladies in the room only inferior in rank and importance to the Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento; and in the course of the evening, at their earnest request, they were made acquainted with Lothair, for it cannot be said he was presented to them. These ladies, generally so calm, would not wait for the ordinary ceremony of life, but, as he approached to be introduced, sank to the ground with the obeisance offered only to royalty.

There were some cardinals in the apartment and several monsignori. Catesby was there in close attendance on a pretty English countess, who had just "gone over." Her husband had been at first very much distressed at the event, and tore himself from the severe duties of the House of Lords,
in the hope that he might yet arrive in time at Rome to save her soul. But he was too late; and, strange to say, being of a domestic turn, and disliking family dissensions, he remained at Rome during the rest of the session, and finally "went over" himself.

Later in the evening arrived his eminence, Cardinal Berwick, for our friend had gained, and bravely gained, the great object of a churchman's ambition, and which even Lothair was thinking at one time of accepting, although he was to remain a firm Anglican. In the death-struggle between the Church and the secret societies, Berwick had been the victor, and no one in the Sacred College more truly deserved the scarlet hat.

His eminence had a reverence of radiant devotion for the Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento, a glance of friendship for Lady St. Jerome—for all, a courtly and benignant smile; but, when he recognized Lothair, he started forward, seized and retained his hand, and then seemed speechless with emotion. "Ah! my comrade in the great struggle!" he at length exclaimed; "this is, indeed, a pleasure—and to see you here!"

Early in the evening, while Lothair was sitting by the side of the princess, his eye had wandered round the room, not unsuccessfully, in search of Miss Arundel; and, when he was free, he would immediately have approached her, but she was in conversation with a Roman prince. Then, when she was for a moment free, he was himself engaged; and, at last, he had to quit abruptly a cardinal of taste, who was describing to him a statue just discovered in the baths of Diocletian, in order to seize the occasion that again offered itself.

Her manner was constrained when he addressed her, but she gave him her hand, which he pressed to his lips. Looking deeply into her violet eyes, he said: "You summoned me to meet you at Rome; I am here."

"And I summoned you to other things," she answered, at first with hesitation and a blush; but then, as if rallying herself to the performance of a duty too high to allow of personal embarrassment, she added: "all of which you will perform, as becomes one favored by Heaven."

"I have been favored by you," said Lothair, speaking low and hurriedly; "to whom I owe my life, and more than my life. Yes," he continued, "this is not the scene I would have chosen to express my gratitude to you for all that you have done for me, and my admiration of your sublime virtues; but I can no longer repress the feelings of my heart, though their utterance be as inadequate as your deeds have been transcendent."

"I was but the instrument of a higher power."

"We are all instruments of a higher power, but the instruments chosen are always choice."

"Ay, there it is!" said Miss Arundel; "and that is what I rejoice you feel. For it is impossible that such a selection could have been made, as in your case, without your being reserved for great results."

"I am but a shattered actor for great results," said Lothair, shaking his head.

"You have had trials," said Miss Arundel; "so had St. Ignatius, so had St. Francis, and great temptations; but these are the tests of character, of will, of spiritual power—the fine gold is searched. All things that have happened have tended and been ordained to one end, and that was to make you the champion of the Church of which you are now more than the child."

"More than the child?"

"Indeed I think so. However, this is hardly the place and occasion to dwell on such matters; and, indeed, I know your friends—my friends equally—are desirous that your convalescence should not be unnecessarily disturbed by what must be, however delightful, still agitating thoughts; but you touched yourself unexpectedly on the theme, and, at any rate, you will pardon one who has the inconvenient quality of having only one thought."

"Whatever you say or think must always interest me."

"You are kind to say so. I suppose you know that our cardinal, Cardinal Grandison, will be here in a few days?"
CHAPTER LXIV.

Although the reception of Lothair by his old friends and by the leaders of the Roman world was in the highest degree flattering, there was something in its tone which was perplexing to him and ambiguous. Could they be ignorant of his Italian antecedents? Impossible. Miss Arundel had admitted, or rather declared, that he had experienced great trials, and even temptations. She could only allude to what had occurred since their parting in England. But all this was now looked upon as satisfactory, because it was ordained, and tended to one end; and what was that end? His devotion to the Church of Rome, of which they admitted he was not formally a child.

It was true that his chief companion was a priest, and that he passed a great portion of his life within the walls of a church. But the priest was his familiar friend in England, who in a foreign land had nursed him with devotion in a desperate illness; and, although in the great calamities, physical and moral, that had overwhelmed him, he had found solace in the beautiful services of a religion which he respected, no one for a moment had taken advantage of this mood of his suffering and enfeebled mind to entrap him into controversy, or to betray him into admissions that he might afterward consider precipitate and immature. Indeed, nothing could be more delicate than the conduct of the Jesuit fathers throughout his communications with them. They seemed sincerely gratified that a suffering fellow-creature should find even temporary consolation within their fair and consecrated structure; their voices modulated with sympathy; their glances gushed with fraternal affection; their affectionate politeness contrived, in a thousand slight instances, the selection of a mass, the arrangement of a picture, the loan of a book, to contribute to the interesting or elegant distraction of his forlorn and brooding being.

And yet Lothair began to feel uneasy, and his uneasiness increased proportionately as his health improved. He sometimes thought that he should like to make an effort and get about a little in the world; but he was very weak, and without any of the resources to which he had been accustomed throughout life. He had no servants of his own, no carriages, no man of business, no banker; and when at last he tried to bring himself to write to Mr. Putney Giles—a painful task—Monsignore Catesby offered to undertake his whole correspondence for him, and announced that his medical attendants had declared that he must under no circumstances whatever attempt at present to write a letter. Hitherto he had been without money, which was lavishly supplied for his physicians and other wants; and he would have been without clothes if the most fashionable tailor in Rome, a German, had not been in frequent attendance on him under the direction of Monsignore Catesby, who, in fact, had organized his wardrobe as he did every thing else.

Somehow or other Lothair never seemed alone. When he woke in the morning the monsignore was frequently kneeling before an oratory in his room, and if by any chance Lothair was wanting at Lady St. Jerome’s reception, Father Coleman, who was now on a visit to the family, would look in and pass the evening with him, as men who keep a gaming-table find it discreet occasionally to change the dealer. It is a huge and even stupendous pile—that Palazzo Agostini, and yet Lothair never tried to thread his way through its vestibules and galleries, or attempt a reconnaissance of its endless chambers, without some monsignore or other gliding up quite depropo and relieving him from the dulness of solitary existence during the rest of his promenade.

Lothair was relieved by hearing that his former guardian, Cardinal Grandison, was daily expected at Rome; and he revolved in his mind whether he should not speak to his eminence generally on the system of his life, which he felt now required some modification. In the interval, however, no change did occur. Lothair attended every day the services of the church, and every evening the receptions of Lady St. Jerome; and between the discharge of these two duties he took a drive with a priest—some-
times with more than one, but always most agreeable men—generally in the environs of the city, or visited a convent, or a villa, some beautiful gardens, or a gallery of works of art.

It was at Lady St. Jerome's that Lothair met his former guardian. The cardinal had only arrived in the morning. His manner to Lothair was affectionate. He retained Lothair's hand and pressed it with his pale, thin fingers; his attenuated countenance blazed for a moment with a divine light.

"I have long wished to see you, sir," said Lothair, "and much wish to talk with you."

"I can hear nothing from you nor of you but what must be most pleasing to me," said the cardinal.

"I wish I could believe that," said Lothair.

The cardinal caressed him; put his arm round Lothair's neck and said, "There is no time like the present. Let us walk together in this gallery," and they withdrew naturally from the immediate scene.

"You know all that has happened, I dare say," said Lothair with embarrassment and with a sigh, "since we parted in England, sir."

"All," said the cardinal. "It has been a most striking and merciful dispensation."

"Then I need not dwell upon it," said Lothair, "and naturally it would be most painful. What I wish particularly to speak to you about is my position under this roof. What I owe to those who dwell under it no language can describe, and no efforts on my part, and they shall be unceasing, can repay. But I think the time has come when I ought no longer to trespass on their affectionate devotion, though, when I allude to the topic, they seem to misinterpret the motives which influence me, and to be pained rather than relieved by my suggestions. I cannot bear being looked upon as ungrateful, when in fact I am devoted to them. I think, sir, you might help me in putting all this right."

"If it be necessary," said the cardinal;

"but I apprehend you misconceive them. When I last left Rome you were very ill, but Lady St. Jerome and others have written to me almost daily about you during my absence, so that I am familiar with all that has occurred, and quite cognizant of their feelings. Rest assured that, toward yourself, they are exactly what they ought to be and what you would desire."

"Well, I am glad," said Lothair, "that you are acquainted with every thing that has happened, for you can put them right if it be necessary; but I sometimes cannot help fancying that they are under some false impression both as to my conduct and my convictions."

"Not in the slightest," said the cardinal, "trust me, my dear friend, for that. They know every thing and appreciate every thing; and, great as, no doubt, have been your sufferings, feel that every thing has been ordained for the best; that the hand of the Almighty has been visible throughout all these strange events; that His Church was never more clearly built upon a rock than at this moment; that this great manifestation will revive, and even restore, the faith of Christendom; and that you yourself must be looked upon as one of the most favored of men."

"Everybody says that," said Lothair, rather peevishly.

"And everybody feels it," said the cardinal.

"Well, to revert to lesser points," said Lothair, "I do not say I want to return to England, for I dread returning to England, and do not know whether I shall ever go back there; and at any rate I doubt not my health at present is unequal to the effort; but I should like some change in my mode of life. I will not say it is too much controlled, for nothing seems ever done without first consulting me; but, somehow or other, we are always in the same groove. I wish to see more of the world; I wish to see Rome, and the people of Rome. I wish to see and do many things which, if I mention, it would seem to hurt the feelings of others, and my own are misconceived, but, if mentioned by you, all would probably be different."

"I understand you, my dear young friend, my child, I will still say," said the cardinal.

"Nothing can be more reasonable than what you suggest. No doubt our friends
may be a little too anxious about you, but they are the best people in the world. You appear to me to be quite well enough now to make more exertion than hitherto they have thought you capable of. They see you every day, and cannot judge so well of you as I who have been absent. I will charge myself to effect all your wishes. And we will begin by my taking you out to-morrow and your driving with me about the city. I will show you Rome and the Roman people."

Accordingly, on the morrow, Cardinal Grandison and his late pupil visited together Rome and the Romans. And first of all Lothair was presented to the cardinal-prefect of the Propaganda, who presides over the ecclesiastical affairs of every country in which the Roman Church has a mission, and that includes every land between the Arctic and the Southern Pole. This glimpse of the organized correspondence with both the Americas, all Asia, all Africa, all Australia, and many European countries, carried on by a countless staff of clerks in one of the most capacious buildings in the world, was calculated to impress the visitor with a due idea of the extensive authority of the Roman Pontiff. This institution, greater, according to the cardinal, than any which existed in ancient Rome, was to propagate the faith, the purity of which the next establishment they visited was to maintain. According to Cardinal Grandison, there never was a body the character of which had been so wilfully and so malignantly misrepresented as that of the Roman Inquisition. Its true object is reformation not punishment; and therefore pardon was sure to follow the admission of error. True it was there were revolting stories afloat, for which there was undoubtedly some foundation, though their exaggeration and malice were evident, of the ruthless conduct of the Inquisition; but these details were entirely confined to Spain, and were the consequences not of the principles of the Holy Office, but of the Spanish race, poisoned by Moorish and Jewish blood, or by long contact with those inhuman infidels. Had it not been for the Inquisition organizing and directing the mitigating influences of the Church, Spain would have been a land of wild beasts; and even in quite modern times it was the Holy Office at Rome which always stepped forward to protect the persecuted, and, by the power of appeal from Madrid to Rome, saved the lives of those who were unjustly or extravagantly accused.

"The real business, however, of the Holy Office now," continued the cardinal, "is in reality only doctrinal; and there is something truly sublime—essentially divine, I would say—in this idea of an old man, like the Holy Father, himself the object of ceaseless persecution by all the children of Satan, never for a moment relaxing his heaven-inspired efforts to maintain the purity of the faith once delivered to the saints, and at the same time to propagate it throughout the whole world, so that there should be no land on which the sun shines that should not afford means of salvation to suffering man. Yes, the Propaganda and the Inquisition alone are sufficient to vindicate the sacred claims of Rome. Compared with them, mere secular and human institutions, however exalted, sink into insignificance."

These excursions with the cardinal were not only repeated, but became almost of daily occurrence. The cardinal took Lothair with him in his visits of business, and introduced him to the eminent characters of the city. Some of these priests were illustrious scholars or notaries of science, whose names were quoted with respect and as authority in the circles of cosmopolitan philosophy. Then there were other institutions at Rome, which the cardinal snatched occasions to visit, and which, if not so awfully venerable as the Propaganda and the Inquisition, nevertheless testified to the advanced civilization of Rome and the Romans, and the enlightened administration of the Holy Father. According to Cardinal Grandison, all the great modern improvements in the administration of hospitals and prisons originated in the eternal city; scientific ventilation, popular lavatories, the cellular or silent system, the reformatory. And yet these were nothing compared with the achievements of the Pontifical Government in education. In short, complete popular education only existed at Rome,
Its schools were more numerous even than its fountains. Gratuitous instruction originated with the ecclesiastics; and from the night-school to the university here might be found the perfect type.

"I really believe," said the cardinal, "that a more virtuous, a more religious, a more happy and contented people than the Romans never existed. They could all be kept in order with the police of one of your counties. True it is, the Holy Father is obliged to garrison the city with twelve thousand men of all arms, but not against the Romans, not against his own subjects. It is the secret societies of atheism who have established their lodges in this city, entirely consisting of foreigners, that render these lamentable precautions necessary. They will not rest until they have exterminated the religious principle from the soul of man, and until they have reduced him to the condition of wild beasts. But they will fail, as they failed the other day, as Sennacherib failed. These men may conquer zouaves and cuirassiers, but they cannot fight against Saint Michael and all the angels. They may do mischief, they may aggravate and prolong the misery of man, but they are doomed to entire and eternal failure."

CHAPTER LXV.

_Lady St. Jerome_ was much interested in the accounts which the cardinal and Lothair gave her of their excursions in the city and their visits.

"It is very true," she said, "I never knew such good people; and they ought to be; so favored by Heaven, and leading a life which, if any thing earthly can, must give them, however faint, some foretaste of our joys hereafter. Did your Eminence visit the Pellegrini?" This was the hospital where Miss Arundel had found Lothair.

The cardinal looked grave. "No," he replied. "My object was to secure for our young friend some interesting but not agitating distraction from certain ideas which, however admirable and transcendently important, are nevertheless too high and profound to permit their constant contemplation with impunity to our infirm natures. Besides," he added, in a lower, but still distinct tone, "I was myself unwilling to visit in a mere casual manner the scene of what I must consider the greatest event of this century."

"But you have been there?" inquired Lady St. Jerome.

His eminence crossed himself.

In the course of the evening Monsignore Catesby told Lothair that a grand service was about to be celebrated in the church of St. George: thanks were to be offered to the Blessed Virgin by Miss Arundel for the miraculous mercy vouchsafed to her in saving the life of a countryman, Lothair. "All her friends will make a point of being there," added the monsignore, "even the Protestants and some Russians. Miss Arundel was very unwilling at first to fulfil this office, but the Holy Father has commanded it. I know that nothing will induce her to ask you to attend; and yet, if I were you, I would turn it over in your mind. I know she said that she would sooner that you were present than all her English friends together. However, you can think about it. One likes to do what is proper."

One does; and yet it is difficult. Sometimes, in doing what we think proper, we get into irremediable scrapes; and often, what we hold to be proper, society in its caprice resolves to be highly improper.

Lady St. Jerome had wished Lothair to see Tivoli, and they were all consulting together when they might go there. Lord St. Jerome who, besides his hunters, had his drag at Rome, wanted to drive them to the place. Lothair sat opposite Miss Arundel, gazing on her beauty. It was like being at Vauxe again. And yet a great deal had happened since they were at Vauxe; and what? So far as they two were concerned, nothing but what should create or confirm relations of confidence and affection. Whatever may have been the influence of others on his existence, hers at least had been one of infinite benignity. She had saved his life; she had cherished it. She had raised him from the
lowest depth of physical and moral prostration to health and comparative serenity. If at Vaux-le-Hall he had beheld her with admiration, had listened with fascinated interest to the fervid expression of her saintly thoughts, and the large purposes of her heroic mind, all these feelings were naturally heightened now when he had witnessed her lofty and consecrated spirit in action, and when that action in his own case had only been exercised for his ineffable advantage.

"Your uncle cannot go to-morrow," continued Lady St. Jerome, "and on Thursday I am engaged."

"And on Friday—" said Miss Arundel, hesitating.

"We are all engaged," said Lady St. Jerome.

"I should hardly wish to go out before Friday anywhere," said Miss Arundel, speaking to her aunt, and in a lower tone.

Friday was the day on which the thanksgiving service was to be celebrated in the Jesuit church of St. George of Cappadocia. Lothair knew this well enough and was embarrassed: a thanksgiving for the mercy vouchsafed to Miss Arundel in saving the life of a fellow-countryman, and that fellow-countryman not present! All her Protestant friends would be there, and some Russians. And he not there! It seemed, on his part, the most ungracious and intolerable conduct. And he knew that she would prefer his presence to that of all her acquaintances together. It was more than ungracious on his part; it was ungrateful, almost inhuman.

Lothair sat silent, and stupid, and stiff, and dissatisfied with himself. Once or twice he tried to speak, but his tongue would not move, or his throat was not clear. And, if he had spoken, he would only have made some trifling and awkward remark. In his mind's eye he saw, gliding about him, the veiled figure of his sick-room, and he recalled with clearness the unceasing and angelic tenderness of which at the time he seemed hardly conscious.

Miss Arundel had risen and had proceeded some way down the room to a cabinet where she was accustomed to place her work. Suddenly Lothair rose and followed her. "Miss Arundel!" he said, and she looked round, hardly stopping when he had reached her. "Miss Arundel, I hope you will permit me to be present at the celebration on Friday?"

She turned round quickly, extending, even eagerly, her hand with mantling cheek. Her eyes glittered with celestial fire. The words hurried from her palpitating lips: "And support me," she said, "for I need support."

In the evening reception, Monsignore Catesby approached Father Coleman. "It is done," he said, with a look of saintly triumph. "It is done at last. He will not only be present, but he will support her. There are yet eight-and-forty hours to elapse. Can any thing happen to defeat us? It would seem not; yet, when so much is at stake, one is fearful. He must never be out of our sight; not a human being must approach him."

"I think we can manage that," said Father Coleman.

CHAPTER LXVI.

The Jesuit church of St. George of Cappadocia was situate in one of the finest piazzas of Rome. It was surrounded with arcades, and in its centre the most beautiful fountain of the city spouted forth its streams to an amazing height, and in forms of graceful fancy. On Friday morning the arcades were festooned with tapestry and hangings of crimson velvet and gold. Every part was crowded, and all the rank and fashion and power of Rome seemed to be there assembling. There had been once some intention on the part of the Holy Father to be present, but a slight indisposition had rendered that not desirable. His holiness, however, had ordered a company of his halberdiers to attend, and the ground was kept by those wonderful guards in the dress of the middle ages—halberds and ruffs, and white plumes, and party-colored coats, a match for our beef-eaters. Carriages with scarlet umbrellas on the box, and each with
three serving-men behind, denoted the presence of the cardinals in force. They were usually brilliant equipages, being sufficiently new, or sufficiently new purchases, Garibaldi and the late commanding officer of Lothair having burnt most of the ancient coaches in the time of the Roman republic twenty years before. From each carriage an eminence descended with his scarlet cap and his purple train borne by two attendants. The Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento was there, and most of the Roman princes and princesses, and dukes, and duchesses. It seemed that the whole court of Rome was there—monsignori and prelates without end. Some of their dresses, and those of the generals of the orders, appropriately varied the general effect, for the ladies were all in black, their heads covered only with black veils.

Monsignore Catesby had arranged with Lothair that they should enter the church by their usual private way, and Lothair therefore was not in any degree prepared for the sight which awaited him on his entrance into it. The church was crowded; not a chair nor a tribune vacant. There was a suppressed gossip going on as in a public place before a performance begins, much fluttering of fans, some snuff taken, and many sugar-plums.

"Where shall we find a place?" said Lothair.

"They expect us in the sacristy," said the monsignore.

The sacristy of the Jesuit church of St. George of Cappadocia might have served for the ballroom of a palace. It was lofty, and proportionately spacious, with a grooved ceiling painted with all the court of heaven. Above the broad and richly-gilt cornice floated a company of seraphim that might have figured as the Cupids of Albano. The apartment was crowded, for there and in some adjoining chambers were assembled the cardinals and prelates, and all the distinguished or official characters, who, in a few minutes, were about to form a procession of almost unequal splendor and sanctity, and which was to parade the whole body of the church.

Lothair felt nervous; an indescribable depression came over him, as on the morning of a contest when a candidate enters his crowded committee-room. Considerable personages, bowing, approached to address him—the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, the Cardinal Assessor of the Holy Office, the Cardinal Pro-Datario, and the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. Monsignor the Secretary of Briefs to Princes and the Master of the Apostolic Palace were presented to him. Had this been a conclave, and Lothair the future pope, it would have been impossible to have treated him with more consideration than he experienced. They assured him that they looked upon this day as one of the most interesting in their lives, and the importance of which to the Church could not be overrated. All this somewhat encouraged him, and he was more himself when a certain general stir, and the entrance of individuals from adjoining apartments, intimated that the proceedings were about to commence. It seemed difficult to marshal so considerable and so stately an assemblage, but those who had the management of affairs were experienced in such matters. The acolytes and the thurifers fell into their places; there seemed no end of banners and large golden crosses; great was the company of the prelates—a long purple line, some only in cassocks, some in robes, and mitred; then came a new banner of the Blessed Virgin, which excited intense interest, and every eye was strained to catch the pictured scene. After this banner, amid frequent incense, walked two of the most beautiful children in Rome, dressed as angels with golden wings; the boy bearing a rose of Jericho, the girl a lily. After these, as was understood, dressed in black and veiled, walked six ladies, who were said to be daughters of the noblest houses of England, and then a single form with a veil touching the ground.

"Here we must go," said Monsignore Catesby to Lothair, and he gently but irresistibly pushed him into his place. "You know you promised to support her. You had better take this," he said, thrusting a lighted taper into his hand; "it is usual, and one should never be singular."

So they walked on, followed by the Roman princes, bearing a splendid balda-
chim. And then came the pomp of the cardinals, each with his train-bearers, exhibiting with the skill of artists the splendor of their violet robes.

As the head of the procession emerged from the sacristy into the church, three organs and a choir, to which all the Roman churches had lent their choicest voices, burst into the Te Deum. Round the church and to all the chapels, and then up the noble nave, the majestic procession moved, and then, the gates of the holy place opening, the cardinals entered and seated themselves, their train-bearers crouching at their knees, the prelates grouped themselves, and the banners and crosses were ranged in the distance, except the new banner of the Virgin, which seemed to hang over the altar. The Holy One seemed to be in what was recently a field of battle, and was addressing a beautiful maiden in the dress of a Sister of Mercy:

“This is your place,” said Monsignore Catesby, and he pushed Lothair into a prominent position.

The service was long, but, sustained by exquisite music, celestial perfumes, and the graceful movements of priests in resplendent dresses continually changing, it could not be said to be wearisome. When all was over, Monsignore Catesby said to Lothair, “I think we had better return by the public way; it seems expected.”

It was not easy to leave the church. Lothair was detained, and received the congratulations of the Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento and many others. The crowd, much excited by the carriages of the cardinals, had not diminished when they came forth, and they were obliged to linger some little time upon the steps, the monsignore making difficulties when Lothair more than once proposed to advance.

“I think we may go now,” said Catesby, and they descended into the piazza. Immediately many persons in this immediate neighborhood fell upon their knees, many asked a blessing from Lothair, and some rushed forward to kiss the hem of his garment.

CHAPTER LXVII.

The Princess Tarpeia-Cinque Cento gave an entertainment in the evening in honor of “the great event.” Italian palaces are so vast, are so ill-adapted to the moderate establishments of modern times, that their grand style in general only impresses those who visit them with a feeling of disappointment and even mortification. The meagre retinue are almost invisible as they creep about the corridors and galleries, and linger in the sequence of lofty chambers. These should be filled with crowds of serving-men and groups of splendid retainers. They were built for the days when a great man was obliged to have a great following; and when the safety of his person, as well as the success of his career, depended on the number and the lustre of his train.

The palace of the Princess Tarpeia was the most celebrated in Rome, one of the most ancient, and certainly the most beautiful. She dwelt in it in a manner not unworthy of her consular blood and her modern income. To-night her guests were received by a long line of foot-servants in showy livery, and bearing the badge of her house, while in every convenient spot pages and gentlemen-ushers, in courtly dress, guided the guests to their place of destination. The palace blazed with light, and showed to advantage the thousand pictures which, it is said, were there enshrined, and the long galleries full of the pale statues of Grecian gods and goddesses, and the busts of the former rulers of Rome and the Romans. The atmosphere was fragrant with rare odors, and music was heard, amid the fall of fountains, in the dim but fancifully-illuminated gardens.

The princess herself wore all those famous jewels which had been spared by all the Goths from the days of Brenna to those of Garibaldi, and on her bosom reposed the celebrated transparent cameo of Augustus, which Caesar himself is said to have presented to Livia, and which Benvenuto Cellini had set in a framework of Cupids and rubies. If the weight of her magnificence were sometimes distressing, she had the consolation of being supported by the arm of Lothair.
Two young Roman princes, members of the Guarda Nobile, discussed the situation. "The English here say," said one, "that he is their richest man."

"And very noble, too," said the other. "Certainly, truly noble—a kind of cousin of the queen."

"This great event must have an effect upon all their nobility. I cannot doubt they will all return to the Holy Father."

"They would if they were not afraid of having to restore their church lands. But they would be much more happy if Rome were again the capital of the world."

"No shadow of doubt. I wonder if this young prince will hunt in the Campagna?"

"All Englishmen hunt."

"I make no doubt he rides well, and has famous horses, and will sometimes lend us one. I am glad his soul is saved."

"Yes; it is well, when the Blessed Virgin intercedes, it should be in favor of princes. When princes become good Christians, it is an example. It does good. And this man will give an impulse to our opera, which wants it, and, as you say, he will have many horses."

In the course of the evening, Miss Arundel, with a beaming face, but of deep expression, said to Lothair: "I could tell you some good news, had I not promised the cardinal that he should communicate it to you himself. He will see you to-morrow. Although it does not affect me personally, it will be to me the happiest event that ever occurred, except, of course, one."

"What can she mean?" thought Lothair. But at that moment Cardinal Berwick approached him, and Miss Arundel glided away.

Father Coleman attended Lothair home to the Agostini Palace, and when they parted said, with much emphasis, "I must congratulate you once more on the great event."

On the following morning, Lothair found on his table a number of the Roman journal published that day. It was customary to place it there, but in general he only glanced at it, and scarcely that. On the present occasion his own name caught immediately his eye. It figured in a long account of the celebration of the preceding day. It was with a continually changing countenance, now scarlet, now pallid as death; with a palpitating heart, a trembling hand, a cold perspiration, and, at length, a disordered vision, that Lothair read the whole of an article, of which we now give a summary:

"Rome was congratulated on the service of yesterday, which celebrated the greatest event of this century. And it came to pass in this wise. It seems that a young English noble of the highest rank, family, and fortune (and here the name and titles of Lothair were accurately given), "like many of the scions of the illustrious and influential families of Britain, was impelled by an irresistible motive to enlist as a volunteer in the service of the pope, when the Holy Father was recently attacked by the secret societies of atheism. This gallant and gifted youth, after prodigies of valor and devotion, had fallen at Mentana in the sacred cause, and was given up for lost. The day after the battle, when the ambulances laden with the wounded were hourly arriving at Rome from the field, an English lady, daughter of an illustrious house, celebrated throughout centuries for its devotion to the Holy See, and who during the present awful trial had never ceased in her efforts to support the cause of Christianity, was employed, as was her wont, in offices of charity, and was tending, with her companion sisters, her wounded countrymen at the Hospital La Consolazione, in the new ward which has been recently added to that establishment by the Holy Father."

"While she was leaning over one of the beds, she felt a gentle and peculiar pressure on her shoulder, and, looking round, beheld a most beautiful woman, with a countenance of singular sweetness and yet majesty. And the visitor said: 'You are attending to those English who believe in the Virgin Mary. Now at the Hospital Santissima Trinitá di Pellegrini there is in an ambulance a young Englishman apparently dead, but who will not die if you go to him immediately and say you came in the name of the Virgin.'"

"The influence of the stranger was so irresistible that the young English lady, attended by a nurse and one of the porters of La Consolazione, repaired instantly to
the Di Pellegrini, and there they found in the court-yard, as they had been told, an ambulance, in form and color and equipment unlike any ambulance used by the papal troops, and in the ambulance the senseless body of a youth, who was recognized by the English lady as her young and gallant countryman. She claimed him in the name of the Blessed Virgin, and, after due remedies, was permitted to take him at once to his noble relatives, who lived in the Palazzo Agostini.

"After a short time much conversation began to circulate about this incident. The family wished to testify their gratitude to the individual whose information had led to the recovery of the body, and subsequently of the life of their relation; but all that they could at first learn at La Consolazione was, that the porter believed the woman was Maria Serafina di Angelis, the handsome wife of a tailor in the Strada di Ripetta. But it was soon shown that this could not be true, for it was proved that, on the day in question, Maria Serafina di Angelis was on a visit to a friend at La Riccia; and, in the second place, that she did not bear the slightest resemblance to the stranger who had given the news. Moreover, the porter of the gate being required to state why he had admitted any stranger without the accustomed order, denied that he had so done; that he was in his lodge and the gates were locked, and the stranger had passed through without his knowledge.

"Two priests were descending the stairs when the stranger came upon them, and they were so struck by the peculiarity of her carriage, that they turned round and looked at her, and clearly observed at the back of her head a sort of halo. She was out of their sight when they made this observation, but in consequence of it they made inquiries of the porter of the gate, and remained in the court-yard till she returned.

"This she did a few minutes before the English lady and her attendants came down, as they had been detained by the preparation of some bandages and other remedies, without which they never moved.

The porter of the gate having his attention called to the circumstance by the priests, was most careful in his observations as to the halo, and described it as most distinct. The priests then followed the stranger, who proceeded down a long and solitary street, made up in a great degree of garden and convent walls, and without a turning. They observed her stop and speak to two children, and then, though there was no house to enter and no street to turn into, she vanished.

"When they had reached the children they found each of them holding in its hand a beautiful flower. It seems the lady had given the boy a rose of Jericho, and to his sister a white and golden lily. Inquiring whether she had spoken to them, they answered that she had said, 'Let these flowers be kept in remembrance of me; they will never fade.' And truly, though months had elapsed, these flowers had never failed, and, after the procession of yesterday, they were placed under crystal in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin in the Jesuit Church of St. George of Cappodocia, and may be seen every day, and will be seen forever in primeval freshness.

"This is the truthful account of what really occurred with respect to this memorable event, and as it was ascertained by a consulta of the Holy Office, presided over by the cardinal prefect himself. The Holy Office is most severe in its investigation whenever any miraculous interposition is alleged. It was entirely by its exertions that the somewhat inconsistent and unsatisfactory evidence of the porter of the gate, in the first instance, was explained, cleared, and established; the whole chain of evidence worked out; all idle gossip and mere rumors rejected; and the evidence obtained of above twenty witnesses of all ranks of life, some of them members of the learned profession, and others military officers of undisputed honor and veracity, who witnessed the first appearance of the stranger at the Pellegrini, and the undoubted fact of the halo playing round her temples.
"The consulta of the Holy Office could only draw one inference, sanctioned by the Holy Father himself, as to the character of the personage who thus deigned to appear and interpose; and no wonder that, in the great function of yesterday, the eyes of all Rome were fixed upon Lothair as the most favored of living men."

He himself now felt as one sinking into an unfathomable abyss. The despair came over him that involves a man engaged in a hopeless contest with a remorseless power. All his life during the last year passed rushingly across his mind. He recalled the wiles that had been employed to induce him to attend a function in a Jesuits' chapel, in an obscure nook of London; the same agencies had been employed there; then, as now, the influence of Clare Arundel had been introduced to sway him when all others had failed. Belmont had saved him then. There was no Belmont now. The last words of Theodora murmured in his ear like the awful voice of a distant sea. They were the diapason of all the thought and feeling of that profound and passionate spirit.

That seemed only a petty plot in London, and he had since sometimes smiled when he remembered how it had been baffled. Shallow apprehension! The petty plot was only part of a great and unceasing and triumphant conspiracy, and the obscure and inferior agencies which he had been rash enough to deride had consummated their commanded purpose in the eyes of all Europe, and with the aid of the great powers of the world.

He felt all the indignation natural to a sincere and high-spirited man, who finds that he has been befuddled by those whom he has trusted; but, summoning all his powers to extricate himself from his desolate dilemma, he found himself without resource. What public declaration on his part could alter the undeniable fact, now circulating throughout the world, that in the supernatural scene of yesterday he was the willing and the principal actor? Unquestionably he had been very imprudent, not only in that instance, but in his habitual visits to the church; he felt all that now. But he was torn and shattered, infinitely distressed, both in body and in mind; weak and miserable; and he thought he was leaning on angelic hearts, when he found himself in the embrace of spirits of another sphere.

In what a position of unexampled pain did he not now find himself! To feel it your duty to quit the faith in which you have been bred must involve an awful pang; but to be a renegade without the consolation of conscience, against your sense, against your will, alike for no celestial hope and no earthly object—this was agony mixed with self-contempt.

He remembered what Lady Corisande had once said to him about those who quitted their native church for the Roman communion. What would she say now? He marked in imagination the cloud of sorrow on her imperial brow and the scorn of her curled lip.

Whatever happened, he could never return to England—at least for many years, when all the things and persons he cared for would have disappeared, or changed, which is worse; and then what would be the use of returning? He would go to America, or Australia, or the Indian Ocean, or the interior of Africa; but even in all these places, according to the correspondence of the Propaganda, he would find Roman priests, and active priests. He felt himself a lost man; not free from faults in this matter, but punished beyond his errors. But this is the fate of men who think they can struggle successfully with a supernatural power.

A servant opened a door and said, in a loud voice, that, with his permission, his eminence, the English cardinal, would wait on him.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

It is proverbial to what drowning men will cling. Lothair, in his utter hopelessness, made a distinction between the cardinal and the conspirators. The cardinal had been absent from Rome during the greater
portion of the residence of Lothair in that city. The cardinal was his father's friend, an English gentleman, with an English education, once an Anglican, a man of the world, a man of honor, a good, kind-hearted man. Lothair explained the apparent and occasional cooperation of his eminence with the others, by their making use of him without a due consciousness of their purpose on his part. Lothair remembered how delicately his former guardian had always treated the subject of religion in their conversations. The announcement of his visit, instead of aggravating the distresses of Lothair, seemed, as all these considerations rapidly occurred to him, almost to impart a ray of hope.

"I see," said the cardinal, as he entered serene and graceful as usual, and glancing at the table, "that you have been reading the account of our great act of yesterday."

"Yes; and I have been reading it," said Lothair, reddening, "with indignation; with alarm; I should add, with disgust."

"How is this?" said the cardinal, feeling or affecting surprise.

"It is a tissue of falsehood and imposture," continued Lothair; "and I will take care that my opinion is known of it."

"Do nothing rashly," said the cardinal. "This is an official journal, and I have reason to believe that nothing appears in it which is not drawn up, or well considered, by truly pious men."

"You yourself, sir, must know," continued Lothair, "that the whole of this statement is founded on falsehood."

"Indeed, I should be sorry to believe," said the cardinal, "that there was a particle of misstatement, or even exaggeration, either in the base or the superstructure of the narrative."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lothair. "Why, take the very first allegation, that I fell at Mentana, fighting in the ranks of the Holy Father. Every one knows that I fell fighting against him, and that I was almost slain by one of his chassepots. It is notorious; and though, as a matter of taste, I have not obtruded the fact in the society in which I have been recently living, I have never attempted to conceal it, and I have not the slightest doubt that it must be as familiar to every member of that society as to your eminence."

"I know there are two narratives of your relations with the battle of Mentana," observed the cardinal, quietly. "The one accepted as authentic is that which appears in this journal; the other account, which can only be traced to yourself, bears no doubt a somewhat different character; but considering that it is in the highest degree improbable, and that there is not a tittle of confirmatory or collateral evidence to extenuate its absolute unlikelihood, I hardly think you are justified in using, with reference to the statement in this article, the harsh expression, which I am persuaded, on reflection, you will feel you have hastily used."

"I think," said Lothair, with a kindling eye and a burning cheek, "that I am the best judge of what I did at Mentana."

"Well, well," said the cardinal, with dulcet calmness, "you naturally think so; but you must remember you have been very ill, my dear young friend, and laboring under much excitement. If I were you—and I speak as your friend, I hope your best one—I would not dwell too much on this fancy of yours about the battle of Mentana. I would myself always deal tenderly with a fixed idea: harsh attempts to terminate hallucination are seldom successful. Nevertheless, in the case of a public event, a matter of fact, if a man finds that he is of one opinion, and all orders of society of another, he should not be encouraged to dwell on a perverted view; he should be gradually weaned from it."

"You amaze me!" said Lothair.

"Not at all," said the cardinal. "I am sure you will benefit by my advice. And you must already perceive that, assuming the interpretation which the world without exception places on your conduct in the field to be the just one, there really is not a single circumstance in the whole of this interesting and important statement, the accuracy of which you yourself would for a moment dispute."

"What is there said about me at Men-
tana makes me doubt of all the rest," said Lothair.

"Well, we will not dwell on Montana," said the cardinal, with a sweet smile; "I have treated of that point. Your case is by no means an uncommon one. It will wear off with returning health. King George IV. believed that he was at the battle of Waterloo, and indeed commanded there; and his friends were at one time a little alarmed; but Knighton, who was a sensible man, said, 'His majesty has only to leave off Curacao, and rest assured he will gain no more victories.' The rest of this statement, which is to-day officially communicated to the whole world, and which in its results will probably be not less important even than the celebration of the centenary of St. Peter, is established by evidence so incontestable—by witnesses so numerous, so various—in all the circumstances and accidents of testimony so satisfactory—I may say so irresistible, that controversy on this head would be a mere impertinence and waste of time."

"I am not convinced," said Lothair.

"Hush!" said the cardinal; "the freaks of your own mind about personal incidents, however lamentable, may be viewed with indulgence—at least for a time. But you cannot be permitted to doubt of the rest. You must be convinced, and on reflection you will be convinced. Remember, sir, where you are. You are in the centre of Christendom, where truth, and where alone truth resides. Divine authority has perused this paper and approved it. It is published for the joy and satisfaction of two hundred millions of Christians, and for the salvation of all those who, unhappily for themselves, are not yet converted to the faith. It records the most memorable event of this century. Our Blessed Lady has personally appeared to her votaries before during that period, but never at Rome. Wisely and well she has worked in villages and among the illiterate as at the beginning did her Divine Son. But the time is now ripe for terminating the infidelity of the world. In the eternal city, amid all its matchless learning and profound theology, in the sight of thousands, this great act has been accomplished, in a manner which can admit of no doubt, and which can lead to no controversy. Some of the most notorious atheists of Rome have already solicited to be admitted to the offices of the Church; the secret societies have received their deathblow; I look to the alienation of England as virtually over. I am panting to see you return to the home of your fathers, and reconquer it for the Church in the name of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Never was a man in a greater position since Godfrey or Ignatius. The eyes of all Christendom are upon you as the most favored of men, and you stand there like Saint Thomas."

"Perhaps he was as bewildered as I am," said Lothair.

"Well, his bewilderment ended in his becoming an apostle, as yours will. I am glad we have had this conversation, and that we agree; I knew we should. But now I wish to speak to you on business, and very grave. The world assumes that, being the favored of Heaven, you are naturally and necessarily a member of the Church. I, your late guardian, know that is not the case, and sometimes I blame myself that it is not so. But I have ever scrupulously refrained from attempting to control your convictions; and the result has justified me. Heaven has directed your life, and I have now to impart to you the most gratifying intelligence that can be communicated by man, and that the Holy Father will to-morrow himself receive you into the bosom of that Church of which he is the divine head. Christendom will then hail you as its champion and regenerator, and thus will be realized the divine dream with which you were inspired in our morning walk in the park at Vauxe."

CHAPTER LXIX.

It was the darkest hour in Lothair's life. He had become acquainted with sorrow; he had experienced calamities physical and moral. The death of Theodora had shaken him to the centre. It was that first great grief which makes a man acquainted with
his deepest feelings, which detracts something from the buoyancy of the youngest life, and dims, to a certain degree, the lustre of existence. But even that bereavement was mitigated by distractions alike inevitable and ennobling. The sternest and highest of all obligations, military duty, claimed him with an unfultering grasp, and the clarion sounded almost as he closed her eyes. Then he went forth to struggle for a cause which at least she believed to be just and sublime; and if his own convictions on that head might be less assured or precise, still there was doubtless much that was inspiring in the contest, and much dependent on the success of himself and his comrades that tended to the elevation of man.

But, now, there was not a single circumstance to sustain his involved and sinking life. A renegade—a renegade without conviction, without necessity, in absolute violation of the pledge he had given to the person he most honored and most loved, as he received her parting spirit. And why was all this? and how was all this? What system of sorcery had encompassed his existence? For he was spell-bound—as much as any knight in fairy-tale whom malignant influences had robbed of his valor and will and virtue. No sane person could credit, even comprehend, his position. Had he the opportunity of stating it in a court of justice to-morrow, he could only enter into a narrative which would decide his lot as an insane being. The magical rites had been so gradual, so subtle, so multifarious, all in appearance independent of each other, though in reality scientifically combined, that, while the conspirators had probably effected his ruin both in body and in soul, the only charges he could make against them would be acts of exquisite charity, tenderness, self-sacrifice, personal devotion, refined piety, and religious sentiment of the most exalted character.

What was to be done? And could any thing be done? Could he escape? Where from and where to? He was certain, and had been for some time, from many circumstances, that he was watched. Could he hope that the vigilance which observed all his movements would scruple to prevent any which might be inconvenient? He felt assured that, to quit that palace alone, was not in his power. And were it, whither could he go? To whom was he to appeal? And about what was he to appeal? Should he appeal to the Holy Father? There would be an opportunity for that to-morrow. To the Collège of Cardinals, who had solemnized yesterday with gracious union his spiritual triumph? To those congenial spirits, the mild Assessor of the Inquisition, or the president of the Propaganda, who was busied at that moment in circulating throughout both the Americas, all Asia, all Africa, all Australia, and parts of Europe, for the edification of distant millions, the particulars of the miraculous scene in which he was the principal actor? Should he throw himself on the protection of the ambiguous minister of the British crown, and invoke his aid against a conspiracy touching the rights, reason, and freedom of one of her majesty's subjects? He would probably find that functionary inditing a private letter to the English Secretary of State, giving the minister a graphic account of the rare doings of yesterday, and assuring the minister, from his own personal and ocular experience, that a member of one of the highest orders of the British peerage carried in the procession a lighted taper after two angels with amaranthine flowers and golden wings.

Lothair remained in his apartments; no one approached him. It was the only day that the monsignore had not waited on him. Father Coleman was equally reserved. Strange to say, not one of those agreeable and polite gentlemen, fathers of the oratory, who talked about gems, torsos, and excavations, and who always more or less attended his levee, troubled him this morning. With that exquisite tact which pervades the hierarchical circles of Rome, every one felt that Lothair, on the eve of that event of his life which Providence had so long and so mysteriously prepared, would wish to be undisturbed.

Restless, disquieted, revolving all the incidents of his last year, trying, by terrible analysis, to ascertain how he ever could have got into such a false position, and how
he could yet possibly extricate himself from it, not shrinking in many things from self-blame, and yet not recognizing on his part such a degree of deviation from the standard of right feeling, or even of common-sense, as would authorize such an overthrow as that awaiting him—high rank and boundless wealth, a station of duty and of honor, some gifts of Nature, and golden youth, and a disposition that at least aspired, in the employment of these accidents of life and fortune, at something better than selfish gratification, all smashed—the day drew on.

Drew on the day, and every hour it seemed his spirit was more lone and dark. For the first time the thought of death occurred to him as a relief from the perplexities of existence. How much better had he died at Mentana! To this pass had arrived the cordial and brilliant Lord of Muriel, who enjoyed and adorned life, and wished others to adorn and to enjoy it; the individual whom, probably, were the majority of the English people polled, they would have fixed upon as filling the most enviable of all positions, and holding out a hope that he was not unworthy of it. Born with every advantage that could command the sympathies of his fellow-men, with a quick intelligence and a noble disposition, here he was at one-and-twenty ready to welcome death, perhaps even to devise it, as the only rescue from a doom of confusion, degradation, and remorse.

He had thrown himself on a sofa, and had buried his face in his hands to assist the abstraction which he demanded. There was not an incident of his life that escaped the painful inquisition of his memory. He passed his childhood once more in that stern Scotch home, that, after all, had been so kind, and, as it would seem, so wise. The last words of counsel and of warning from his uncle, expressed at Muriel, came back to him. And yet there seemed a destiny throughout these transactions which was irresistible! The last words of Theodora, her look, even more solemn than her tone, might have been breathed over a tripod, for they were a prophecy, not a warning.

How long he had been absorbed in this passionate reverie he knew not, but when he looked up again it was night, and the moon had touched his window. He rose and walked up and down the room, and then went into the corridor. All was silent; not an attendant was visible; the sky was clear and starry, and the moonlight fell on the tall, still cypresses in the vast quadrangle.

Lothair leaned over the balustrade and gazed upon the moonlit fountains. The change of scene, silent and yet not voiceless, and the softening spell of the tranquilizing hour, were a relief to him. And after a time he wandered about the corridors, and after a time he descended into the court. The tall Swiss, in his grand uniform, was closing the gates which had just released a visitor. Lothair motioned that he too wished to go forth, and the Swiss obeyed him. The threshold was passed, and Lothair found himself for the first time alone in Rome.

Utterly reckless, he cared not where he went or what might happen. The streets were quite deserted, and he wandered about with a strange curiosity, gratified as he sometimes encountered famous objects he had read of, and yet the true character of which no reading ever realizes.

The moonlight becomes the prond palaces of Rome, their corniced and balconied fronts rich with deep shadows in the blaze. Sometimes he encountered an imperial column; sometimes he came to an arcadian square flooded with light and resonant with the fall of statued fountains. Emerging from a long, straggling street of convents and gardens, he found himself in an open space full of antique ruins, and among them the form of a colossal amphitheatre that he at once recognized,

It rose with its three tiers of arches and the huge wall that crowns them, black and complete in the air; and not until Lothair had entered it could he perceive the portion of the outer wall that was in ruins, and now bathed with the silver light. Lothair was alone. In that huge creation, once echoing with the shouts, and even the agonies, of thousands, Lothair was alone.

He sat him down on a block of stone in that sublime and desolate arena, and asked
himself the secret spell of this Rome that had already so agitated his young life, and probably was about critically to affect it. Theodora lived for Rome and died for Rome. And the cardinal, born and bred an English gentleman, with many hopes and honors, had renounced his religion, and, it might be said, his country, for Rome. And for Rome, to-morrow, Catesby would die without a pang, and sacrifice himself for Rome, as his race for three hundred years had given, for the same cause, honor and broad estates and unhesitating lives. And these very people were influenced by different motives, and thought they were devoting themselves to opposite ends. But still it was Rome—republican or Cæsarian, papal or pagan, it still was Rome.

Was it a breeze in a breezeless night that was sighing amid these ruins? A pine-tree moved its head on a broken arch, and there was a stir among the plants that hung on the ancient walls. It was a breeze in a breezeless night that was sighing amid the ruins.

There was a tall crag of ancient building contiguous to the block on which Lothair was seated, and which on his arrival he had noted, although, long lost in reverie, he had not recently turned his glance in that direction. He was roused from that reverie by the indefinite sense of some change having occurred which often disturbs and terminates one’s brooding thoughts. And looking round, he felt, he saw, he was no longer alone. The moonbeams fell upon a figure that was observing him from the crag of ruin that was near, and, as the light clustered and gathered round the form, it became every moment more definite and distinct.

Lothair would have sprung forward, but he could only extend his arms: he would have spoken, but his tongue was paralyzed.

"Lothair," said a deep, sweet voice that never could be forgotten.

"I am here," he at last replied.

"Remember!" and she threw upon him that glance, at once serene and solemn, that had been her last, and was impressed indelibly upon his heart of hearts.

Now, he could spring forward and throw himself at her feet, but alas! as he reached her, the figure melted into the moonlight, and she was gone—that divine Theodora, who, let us hope, returned at last to those Elysian fields she so well deserved.

CHAPTER LXX.

"They have overdone it, Gertrude, with Lothair," said Lord Jerome to his wife.

"I spoke to Monsignore Catesby about it some time ago, but he would not listen to me; I had more confidence in the cardinal, and am disappointed; but a priest is ever too hot. His nervous system has been tried too much."

Lady St. Jerome still hoped the best, and believed in it. She was prepared to accept the way Lothair was found senseless in the Coliseum as a continuance of miraculous interpositions. He might have remained there for a day or days, and never have been recognized when discovered. How marvelously providential that Father Coleman should have been in the vicinity, and tempted to visit the great ruin that very night!

Lord St. Jerome was devout, and easy in his temper. Priests and women seemed to have no difficulty in managing him. But he was an English gentleman, and there was at the bottom of his character a fund of courage, firmness, and common-sense, that sometimes startled and sometimes perplexed those who assumed that he could be easily controlled. He was not satisfied with the condition of Lothair, "a peer of England and my connection;" and he had not unlimited confidence in those who had been hitherto consulted as to his state. There was a celebrated English physician at that time visiting Rome, and Lord St. Jerome, notwithstanding the multiform resistance of Monsignore Catesby, insisted he should be called in to Lothair.

The English physician was one of those men who abhor priests, and do not particularly admire ladies. The latter, in revenge, denounced his manners as brutal, though
they always sent for him, and were always trying, though vainly, to pique him into sympathy. He rarely spoke, but he listened to every one with entire patience. He sometimes asked a question, but he never made a remark.

Lord St. Jerome had seen the physician alone before he visited the Palazzo Agostini, and had talked to him freely about Lothair. The physician saw at once that Lord St. Jerome was truthful, and that, though his intelligence might be limited, it was pure and direct. Appreciating Lord St. Jerome, that nobleman found the redoubtable doctor not ungenial, and assured his wife that she would meet on the morrow by no means so savage a being as she anticipated. She received him accordingly, and in the presence of Monsignore Catesby. Never had she exercised her distinguished powers of social rhetoric with more art and fervor, and never apparently had they proved less productive of the intended consequences. The physician said not a word, and merely bowed when exhausted Nature consigned the luminous and impassioned Lady St. Jerome to inevitable silence. Monsignore Catesby felt he was bound in honor to make some diversion in her favor; repeat some of her unanswered inquiries, and reiterate some of her unnoticed views; but the only return he received was silence, without a bow, and then the physician remarked, "I presume I can now see the patient."

The English physician was alone with Lothair for some time, and then he met in consultation the usual attendants. The result of all these proceedings was that he returned to the saloon, in which he found Lord and Lady St. Jerome, Monsignore Catesby, and Father Coleman, and he then said: "My opinion is, that his lordship should quit Rome immediately, and I think he had better return at once to his own country."

All the efforts of the English Propaganda were now directed to prevent the return of Lothair to his own country. The cardinal and Lady St. Jerome, and the monsignore, and Father Coleman, all the beautiful young countesses who had "gone over" to Rome, and all the spirited young earls who had come over to bring their wives back, but had unfortunately remained themselves, looked very serious, and spoke much in whispers. Lord St. Jerome was firm that Lothair should immediately leave the city, and find that change of scene and air which were declared by authority to be indispensable for his health, both of mind and body. But his return to England, at this moment, was an affair of serious difficulty. He could not return unattended, and attended, too, by some intimate and devoted friend. Besides, it was very doubtful whether Lothair had strength remaining to bear so great an exertion, and at such a season of the year—and he seemed disinclined to it himself. He also wished to leave Rome, but he wished also in time to extend his travels. Amid these difficulties, a Neapolitan duke, a great friend of Monsignore Catesby, a gentleman who always had a friend in need, offered to the young English noble, the interesting young Englishman so favored by Heaven, the use of his villa on the coast of the remotest part of Sicily, near Syracuse. Here was a solution of many difficulties: departure from Rome, change of scene and air—sea air, too, particularly recommended—and almost the same as a return to England, without an effort, for was it not an island, only with a better climate, and a people with free institutions, or a taste for them, which is the same?

The mode in which Lady St. Jerome and Monsignore Catesby consulted Lord St. Jerome on the subject took the adroit but insidious form of congratulating him on the entire and unexpected fulfilment of his purpose. "Are we not fortunate?" exclaimed her ladyship, looking up brightly in his face, and gently pressing one of his arms.

"Exactly every thing your lordship required," echoed Monsignore Catesby, congratulating him by pressing the other.

The cardinal said to Lord St. Jerome, in the course of the morning, in an easy way, and as if he were not thinking too much of the matter, "So, you have got out of all your difficulties."

Lord St. Jerome was not entirely satisfied, but he thought he had done a great
deal, and, to say the truth, the effort for him had not been inconsiderable; and so the result was that Lothair, accompanied by Monsignore Catesby and Father Coleman, travelled by easy stages, and chiefly on horseback, through a delicious and romantic country, which alone did Lothair a great deal of good, to the coast; crossed the straits on a serene afternoon, visited Messina and Palermo, and finally settled at their point of destination—the Villa Catalano.

Nothing could be more satisfactory than the monsignore’s bulletin, announcing to his friends at Rome their ultimate arrangements. Three weeks’ travel, air, horse exercise, the inspiration of the landscape and the clime, had wonderfully restored Lothair, and they might entirely count on his passing Holy Week at Rome, when all they had hoped and prayed for would, by the blessing of the Holy Virgin, be accomplished.

CHAPTER LXXI.

The terrace of the Villa Catalano, with its orange and palm trees, looked upon a sea of lapiz lazuli, and rose from a shelving shore of aloes and arbutus. The waters reflected the color of the sky, and all the foliage was bedewed with the same violet light of morn which bathed the softness of the distant mountains, and the undulating beauty of the ever-varying coast.

Lothair was walking on the terrace, his favorite walk, for it was the only occasion on which he ever found himself alone. Not that he had any reason to complain of his companions. More complete ones could scarcely be selected. Travel, which, they say, tries all tempers, had only proved the engaging equanimity of Catesby, and had never disturbed the amiable repose of his brother priest: and then they were so entertaining and so instructive, as well as handy and experienced in all common things. The monsignore had so much taste and feeling, and various knowledge; and as for the reverend father, all the antiquaries they daily encountered were mere children in his hands, who, without effort, could explain and illustrate every scene and object, and spoke as if he had never given a thought to any other theme than Sicily and Syracuse, the expedition of Nicias, and the adventures of Agathocles. And yet, during all their travels, Lothair felt that he never was alone. This was remarkable at the great cities, such as Messina and Palermo, but it was a prevalent habit in less-frequented places. There was a petty town near them, which he had never visited alone, although he had made more than one attempt with that view; and it was only on the terrace in the early morn, a spot whence he could be observed from the villa, and which did not easily communicate with the precipitous and surrounding scenery, that Lothair would indulge that habit of introspection which he had pursued through many a long ride, and which to him was a never-failing source of interest and even excitement.

He wanted to ascertain the causes of what he deemed the failure of his life, and of the dangers and discomfort that were still impending over him. Were these causes to be found in any peculiarity of his disposition, or in the general inexperience and incompetence of youth? The latter, he was now quite willing to believe, would lead their possessors into any amount of disaster, but his ingenuous nature hesitated before it accepted them as the self-complacent solution of his present deplorable position.

Of a nature profound and inquisitive, though with a great fund of reverence which had been developed by an ecclesiastical education, Lothair now felt that he had started in life with an extravagant appreciation of the influence of the religious principle on the conduct of human affairs. With him, when heaven was so nigh, earth could not be remembered; and yet experience showed that, so long as one was on the earth, the incidents of this planet considerably controlled one’s existence, both in behavior and in thought. All the world could not retire to Mount Athos. It was clear, therefore, that there was a juster conception of the relations between religion and life than that which he had at first adopted.

Practically, Theodora had led, or was leading, him to this result; but Theodora,
though religious, did not bow before those altars to which he for a moment had never been faithless. Theodora believed in her immortality, and did not believe in death according to the ecclesiastical interpretation. But her departure from the scene, and the circumstances under which it had taken place, had unexpectedly and violently restored the course of his life to its old bent. Shattered and shorn, he was willing to believe that he was again entering the kingdom of heaven, but found he was only under the gilded dome of a Jesuit’s church, and waked to reality, from a scene of magical deceptions, with a sad conviction that even cardinals and fathers of the Church were inevitably influenced in this life by its interests and its passions.

But the incident of his life that most occupied—it might be said engrossed—his meditation was the midnight apparition in the Coliseum. Making every allowance that a candid nature and an ingenious mind could suggest for explicatory circumstances; the tension of his nervous system, which was then doubtless strained to its last point; the memory of her death-scene, which always harrowed and haunted him; and that dark collision between his promise and his life which then, after so many efforts, appeared by some supernatural ordination to be about inevitably to occur in that very Rome whose gigantic shades surrounded him; he still could not resist the conviction that he had seen the form of Theodora and had listened to her voice. Often the whole day, when they were travelling, and his companions watched him on his saddle in silent thought, his mind in reality was fixed on this single incident, and he was cross-examining his memory as some adroit and ruthless advocate deals with the witness in the box, and tries to demonstrate his infidelity or his weakness.

But whether it were indeed the apparition of his adored friend or a distempered dream, Lothair not less recognized the warning as divine, and the only conviction he had arrived at throughout his Sicilian travels was a determination that, however tragic the cost, his promise to Theodora should never be broken.

The beautiful terrace of the Villa Catalano overlooked a small bay to which it descended by winding walks. The water was deep, and in any other country the bay might have been turned to good account; but bays abounded on this coast, and the people, with many harbors, had no freights to occupy them. This morn, this violet morn, when the balm of the soft breeze refreshed Lothair, and the splendor of the rising sun began to throw a flashing line upon the azure waters, a few fishermen in one of the country boats happened to come in, about to dry a net upon a sunny bank. The boat was what is called a speroraro; an open boat worked with ears, but with a lateen sail at the same time when the breeze served.

Lothair admired the trim of the vessel, and got talking with the men as they ate their bread and olives, and a small fish or two.

“And your lateen sail—?” continued Lothair.

“Is the best thing in the world, except in a white squall,” replied the sailor, “and then every thing is queer in these seas with an open boat, though I am not afraid of Santa Agnese, and that is her name. But I took two English officers who came over here for sport, and whose leave of absence was out—I took them over in her to Malta, and did it in ten hours. I believe it had never been done in an open boat before, but it was neck or nothing with them.”

“And you saved them?”

“With the lateen up the whole way.”

“They owed you much, and I hope they paid you well.”

“I asked them ten ducats,” said the man, “and they paid me ten ducats.”

Lothair had his hand in his pocket all this time, feeling, but imperceptibly, for his purse, and, when he had found it, feeling how it was lined. He generally carried about him as much as Fortunatus.

“What are you going to do with yourselves this morning?” said Lothair.

“Well, not much; we thought of throwing the net, but we have had one dip, and no great luck.”

“Are you inclined to give me a sail?”
"Certainly, signor."
"Have you a mind to go to Malta?"
"That is business, signor."
"Look here," said Lothair, "here are ten ducats in this purse, and a little more. I will give them to you if you will take me to Malta at once; but, if you will start in a hundred seconds, before the sun touches that rock, and the waves just beyond it are already bright, you shall have ten more ducats when you reach the isle."
"Step in, signor."

From the nature of the course, which was not in the direction of the open sea, for they had to double Cape Passaro, the sponarano was out of the sight of the villa in a few minutes. They rowed only till they had doubled the cape, and then set the lateen sail, the breeze being light, but steady and favorable. They were soon in open sea, no land in sight. "And, if a white squall does rise," thought Lothair, "it will only settle many difficulties."

But no white squall came; every thing was favorable to their progress; the wind, the current, the courage, and spirit of the men, who liked the adventure, and liked Lothair. Night came on, but they were as tender to him as women, fed him with their least coarse food, and covered him with a cloak made of stuff spun by their mothers and their sisters.

Lothair was slumbering when the patron of the boat roused him, and he saw at hand many lights, and, in a few minutes, was in still water. They were in one of the harbors of Malta, but not permitted to land at midnight, and, when the morn arrived, the obstacles to the release of Lothair were not easily removed. A sponarano, an open boat from Sicily, of course with no papers to prove their point of departure—here were materials for doubt and difficulty, of which the petty officers of the port knew how to avail themselves. They might come from Barbary, from an infected port; plague might be aboard, a question of quarantine. Lothair observed that they were nearly alongside of a fine steam-yacht, English, for it bore the cross of St. George; and, while on the quay, he and the patron of the sponarano arguing with the officers of the port, a gentleman from the yacht put ashore in a boat, of which the bright equipment immediately attracted attention. The gentleman landed almost close to the point where the controversy was carrying on. The excited manner and voice of the Sicilian mariner could not escape notice. The gentleman stopped and looked at the group, and then suddenly exclaimed: "Good Heavens! my lord, can it be you?"

"Ah, Mr. Phoebus, you will help me!" said Lothair; and then he went up to him and told him every thing. All difficulties, of course, vanished before the presence of Mr. Phoebus, whom the officers of the port evidently looked upon as a being beyond criticism and control.

"And now," said Mr. Phoebus, "about your people and your baggage?"

"I have neither servants nor clothes," said Lothair, "and, if it had not been for these good people, I should not have had food."

CHAPTER LXXII.

Mr. Phoebus, in his steam-yacht Pan, of considerable admeasurement, and fitted up with every luxury and convenience that science and experience could suggest, was on his way to an island which he occasionally inhabited, near the Asian coast of the Ægean Sea, and which he rented from the chief of his wife's house, the Prince of Samos. Mr. Phoebus, by his genius and fame, commanded a large income, and he spent it freely and fully. There was nothing of which he more disapproved than accumulation. It was a practice which led to sordid habits, and was fatal to the beautiful. On the whole, he thought it more odious even than debt, more permanently degrading. Mr. Phoebus liked pomp and graceful ceremony, and he was of opinion that great artists should lead a princely life, so that, in their manners and method of existence, they might furnish models to mankind in general, and elevate the tone and taste of nations.

Sometimes, when he observed a friend noticing with admiration, perhaps with
astonishment, the splendor or finish of his equipments, he would say: "The world think I had a large fortune with Madame Phœbus. I had nothing. I understand that a fortune, and no inconsiderable one, would have been given, had I chosen to ask for it. But I did not choose to ask for it. I made Madame Phœbus my wife because she was the finest specimen of the Aryan race that I was acquainted with, and I would have no considerations mixed up with the high motive that influenced me. My father-in-law Cantacuzene, whether from a feeling of gratitude or remorse, is always making us magnificent presents. I like to receive magnificent presents, but also to make them; and I presented him with a picture which is the gem of his gallery, and which, if he ever part with it, will in another generation be contended for by kings and peoples."

"On her last birthday we breakfasted with my father-in-law Cantacuzene, and Madame Phœbus found in her napkin a check for five thousand pounds. I expended it immediately in jewels for her personal use; for I wished my father-in-law to understand that there are other princely families in the world besides the Cantacuzenes."

A friend once ventured inquiringly to suggest whether his way of life might not be conducive to envy, and so disturb that serenity of sentiment necessary to the complete life of an artist. But Mr. Phœbus would not for a moment admit the soundness of the objection. "No," he said, "envy is a purely intellectual process. Splendor never excites it; a man of splendor is looked upon always with favor—his appearance exhilarates the heart of man. He is always popular. People wish to dine with him, to borrow his money, but they do not envy him. If you want to know what envy is, you should live among artists. You should hear me lecture at the Academy. I have sometimes suddenly turned round and caught countenances like that of the man who was waiting at the corner of the street for Benvenuto Cellini, in order to assassinate the great Florentine."

It was impossible for Lothair in his present condition to have fallen upon a more suitable companion than Mr. Phœbus. It is not merely change of scene and air that we sometimes want, but a revolution in the atmosphere of thought and feeling in which we live and breathe. Besides his great intelligence and fancy, and his peculiar views on art and man and affairs in general, which always interested their hearer, and sometimes convinced, there was a general vivacity in Mr. Phœbus and a vigorous sense of life, which were inspiring to his companions. When there was any thing to be done, great or small, Mr. Phœbus liked to do it; and this, as he averred, from a sense of duty, since, if any thing is to be done, it should be done in the best manner, and no one could do it so well as Mr. Phœbus. He always acted as if he had been created to be the oracle and model of the human race, but the oracle was never pompous or solemn, and the model was always beaming with good-nature and high spirits.

Mr. Phœbus liked Lothair. He liked youth, and good-looking youth; and youth that was intelligent and engaging and well-mannered. He also liked old men. But, between fifty and seventy, he saw little to approve of in the dark sex. They had lost their good looks if they ever had any, their wits were on the wane, and they were invariably selfish. When they attained second childhood, the charm often returned. Age was frequently beautiful, wisdom appeared like an aftermath, and the heart which seemed dry and deadened suddenly put forth shoots of sympathy.

Mr. Phœbus postponed his voyage in order that Lothair might make his preparations to become his guest in his island. "I cannot take you to a banker," said Mr. Phœbus, "for I have none; but I wish you would share my purse. Nothing will ever induce me to use what they call paper money. It is the worst thing that what they call civilization has produced; neither hue nor shape, and yet a substitute for the richest color, and, where the arts flourish, the finest forms."

The telegraph which brought an order to the bankers at Malta to give an unlimited credit to Lothair, rendered it unnecessary
for our friend to share what Mr. Phæbus called his purse, and yet he was glad to have the opportunity of seeing it, as Mr. Phæbus one morning opened a chest in his cabin and produced several velvet bags, one full of pearls, another of rubies, others of Venetian sequins, Napoleons, and golden plastres. "I like to look at them," said Mr. Phæbus, "and find life more intense when they are about my person. But bank-notes, so cold and thin—they give me an ague."

Madame Phæbus and her sister Euphrosyne welcomed Lothair in maritime costumes which were absolutely bewitching; wondrous jackets with loops of pearls, girdles defended by dirks with handles of turquoises, and tilted hats that, while they screened their long eyelashes from the sun, crowned the longer braids of their never-ending hair. Mr. Phæbus gave banquets every day on board his yacht, attended by the chief personages of the island, and the most agreeable officers of the garrison. They dined upon deck, and it delighted him, with a surface of sang-froid, to produce a repast which both in its material and its treatment was equal to the refined festivals of Paris. Sometimes they had a dance; sometimes in his barge, rowed by a crew in Venetian dresses, his guests glided on the tranquil waters, under a starry sky, and listened to the exquisite melodies of their hostess and her sister.

At length the day of departure arrived. It was bright, with a breeze favorable to the sail and opportune for the occasion. For all the officers of the garrison, and all beautiful Valetta itself, seemed present in their yachts and barges to pay their last tribute of admiration to the enchanting sisters and the all-accomplished owner of the Pan. Placed on the galley of his yacht, Mr. Phæbus surveyed the brilliant and animated scene with delight. "This is the way to conduct life," he said. "If, fortunately for them, I could have passed another month among these people, I could have developed a feeling equal to the old regattas of the Venetians."

The Ægean isle occupied by Mr. Phæbus was of no inconsiderable dimensions. A chain of mountains of white marble intersected it, covered with forests of oak, though in parts precipitous and bare. The lowlands, while they produced some good crops of grain, and even cotton and silk, were chiefly clothed with fruit-trees—orange and lemon, and the fig, the olive, and the vine. Sometimes the land was uncultivated, and was principally covered with myrtles, of large size, and oleanders, and arbutus, and thorny brooms. Here game abounded, while from the mountain-forests the wolf sometimes descended, and spoiled and scared the islanders.

On the sea-shore, yet not too near the wave, and on a sylvan declivity, was a long, pavilion-looking building, painted in white and arabesque. It was backed by the forest, which had a park-like character from its partial clearance, and which, after a convenient slip of even land, ascended the steeper country and took the form of wooded hills, backed in due time by still sylvan yet loftier elevations, and sometimes a glittering peak.

"Welcome, my friend!" said Mr. Phæbus to Lothair. "Welcome to an Aryan clime, an Aryan landscape, and an Aryan race! It will do you good after your Semitic hallucinations."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Mr. Phæbus pursued a life in his island partly feudal, partly Oriental, partly Venetian, and partly idiosyncratic. He had a grand studio, where he could always find interesting occupation in drawing every fine face and form in his dominions. Then he hunted, and that was a remarkable scene. The ladies, looking like Diana or her nymphs, were mounted on cream-colored Anatolian chargers, with golden bells; while Mr. Phæbus himself, in green velvet and seven-leagued boots, sounded a wondrous twisted horn, rife with all the inspiring or directing notes of musical and learned veneere. His neighbors of condition came mounted, but the field was by no means confined to cavaliers. A vast crowd of men,
in small caps and jackets and huge white breeches, and armed with all the weapons of Palikari, handjars and ataghans and sil- ver-sheathed muskets of uncommon length and almost as old as the battle of Lepanto, always rallied round his standard. The equestrians caracoled about the park, and the horns sounded, and the hounds bayed, and the men shouted, till the deer had all scudded away. Then, by degrees, the hunt- ers entered the forest, and the notes of veneric became more faint and the shots more distant. Then, for two or three hours, all was silent, save the sound of an occa- sional shot or the note of a stray hound, until the human stragglers began to reap- pear emerging from the forest, and in due time the great body of the hunt, and a gilded cart drawn by mules and carrying the prostrate forms of fallow-deer and roebuck. None of the ceremonies of the chase were omitted, and the crowd dispersed, refreshed by Samian wine, which Mr. Phæbus was teaching them to make without resin, and which they quaffed with shrugging shoul- ders.

"We must have a wolf-hunt for you," said Euphrosyne to Lothair. "You like ex- citement, I believe?"

"Well, I am rather inclined for repose at present, and I came here with the hope of obtaining it."

"Well, we are never idle here; in fact, that would be impossible with Gaston. He has established here an academy of the fine arts, and also revived the gymnasia; and my sister and myself have schools—only music and dancing; Gaston does not ap- prove of letters. The poor people have, of course, their primary schools, with their priests, and Gaston does not interfere with them, but he regrets their existence. He looks upon reading and writing as very in- jurious to education."

Sometimes reposing on divans, the sisters received the chief persons of the isle, and regaled them with fruits and sweetmeats, and coffee and sherbets, while Gaston's chi- bouques and tobacco of Salonica were a proverb. These meetings always ended with dance and song, replete, according to Mr. Phæbus, with studies of Aryan life.

"I believe these islanders to be an un- mixed race," said Mr. Phæbus. "The same form and visage prevails throughout; and very little changed in any thing—even in their religion."

"Unchanged in their religion!" said Lo- thair, with some astonishment.

"Yes; you will find it so. Their exist- ence is easy; their wants are not great, and their means of subsistence plentiful. They pass much of their life in what is called amusement—and what is it? They make parties of pleasure; they go in procession to a fountain or a grove. They dance and eat fruit, and they return home singing songs. They have, in fact, been performing uncon- sciously the religious ceremonies of their ancestors, and which they pursue, and will forever, though they may have forgotten the name of the dryad or the nymph who pres- sides over their waters."

"I should think their priests would guard them from these errors," said Lothair.

"The Greek priests, particularly in these Asian islands, are good sort of people," said Mr. Phæbus. "They marry and have generally large families, often very beautiful. They have no sacerdotal feelings, for they never can have any preference; all the high posts in the Greek Church being re- served for the monks, who study what is called theology. The Greek parish priest is not at all Semitic; there is nothing to counteract his Aryan tendencies. I have already raised the statue of a nymph at one of their favorite springs and places of pleasant pilgrimage, and I have a statue now in the island, still in its case, which I contemplate installing in a famous grove of laurel not far off and very much resorted to."

"And what then?" inquired Lothair.

"Well, I have a conviction that among the great races the old creeds will come back," said Mr. Phæbus, "and it will be acknowledged that true religion is the wor- ship of the beautiful. For the beautiful cannot be attained without virtue, if virtue consists, as I believe, in the control of the passions, in the sentiment of repose, and the avoidance in all things of excess."

One night Lothair was walking home
with the sisters from a village festival, where they had been much amused.

"You have had a great many adventures since we first met?" said Madame Phoebus.

"Which makes it seem longer ago than it really is," said Lothair.

"You count time by emotion, then?" said Euphrosyne.

"Well, it is a wonderful thing, however it be computed," said Lothair.

"For my part, I do not think that it ought to be counted at all," said Madame Phoebus; "and there is nothing to me so detestable in Europe as the quantity of clocks and watches."

"Do you use a watch, my lord?" asked Euphrosyne, in a tone which always seemed to Lothair one of mocking artlessness.

"I believe I never wound it up when I had one," said Lothair.

"But you make such good use of your time," said Madame Phoebus, "you do not require watches."

"I am glad to hear I make good use of my time," said Lothair, "but a little surprised."

"But you are so good, so religious," said Madame Phoebus. "That is a great thing; especially for one so young."

"Hem!" said Lothair.

"That must have been a beautiful procession at Rome," said Euphrosyne.

"I was rather a spectator of it than an actor in it," said Lothair, with some seriousness. "It is too long a tale to enter into, but my part in those proceedings was entirely misrepresented."

"I believe that nothing in the newspapers is ever true," said Madame Phoebus.

"And that is why they are so popular," added Euphrosyne; "the taste of the age being so decidedly for fiction."

"Is it true that you escaped from a convent to Malta?" said Madame Phoebus.

"Not quite," said Lothair, "but true enough for conversation."

"As confidential as the present, I suppose?" said Euphrosyne.

"Yes, when we are grave, as we are inclined to be now," said Lothair.

"Then, you have been fighting a good deal," said Madame Phoebus.

"You are putting me on a court-martial, Madame Phoebus," said Lothair.

"But we do not know on which side you were," said Euphrosyne.

"That is matter of history," said Lothair, "and that, you know, is always doubtful."

"Well, I do not like fighting," said Madame Phoebus, "and for my part I never could find out that it did any good."

"And what do you like?" said Lothair.

"Tell me how would you pass your life?"

"Well, much as I do. I do not know that I want any change, except I think I should like it to be always summer."

"And I would have perpetual spring," said Euphrosyne.

"But, summer or spring, what would be your favorite pursuit?"

"Well, dancing is very nice," said Madame Phoebus.

"But we cannot always be dancing," said Lothair.

"Then we would sing," said Euphrosyne.

"But the time comes when one can neither dance nor sing," said Lothair.

"Oh, then we become part of the audience," said Madame Phoebus, "the people for whose amusement everybody labors."

"And enjoy power without responsibility," said Euphrosyne, "detect false notes and mark awkward gestures. How can any one doubt of Providence with such a system of constant compensation!"

There was something in the society of these two sisters that Lothair began to find highly attractive. Their extraordinary beauty, their genuine and unflagging gaiety, their thorough enjoyment of existence, and the variety of resources with which they made life amusing and graceful, all contributed to captivate him. They had, too, a great love and knowledge both of art and nature, and insensibly they weaned Lothair from that habit of introspection which, though natural to him, he had too much indulged, and taught him to find sources of interest and delight in external objects. He was beginning to feel happy in this island, and wishing that his life might never change, when one day Mr. Phoebus informed them that the Prince Agathonides, the eldest son
of the Prince of Samos, would arrive from Constantinople in a few days, and would pay them a visit. "He will come with some retinue," said Mr. Phæbus, "but I trust we shall be able by our reception to show that the Cantacuzenes are not the only princely family in the world."

Mr. Phæbus was confident in his resources in this respect, for his yacht's crew in their Venetian dresses could always furnish a guard of honor which no Grecian prince or Turkish pacha could easily rival. When the eventful day arrived, he was quite equal to the occasion. The yacht was dressed in every part with the streaming colors of all nations, the banner of Gaston Phæbus waved from his pavilion, the guard of honor kept the ground, but the population of the isle were present in numbers and in their most showy costume, and a battery of ancient Turkish guns fired a salute without an accident.

The Prince Agathonides was a youth, good looking and dressed in a splendid Palikar costume, though his manners were quite European, being an attaché to the Turkish embassy at Vienna. He had with him a sort of governor, a secretary, servants in Mamlouk dresses, pipe-bearers, and grooms, there being some horses as presents from his father to Mr. Phæbus, and some rarely-embroidered kerechiefs and choice perfumes and Persian greyhounds for the ladies.

The arrival of the young prince was the signal for a series of entertainments on the island. First of all, Mr. Phæbus resolved to give a dinner in the Frank style, to prove to Agathonides that there were other members of the Cantacuzene family besides himself who comprehended a first-rate Frank dinner. The chief people of the island were invited to this banquet. They drank the choicest grapes of France and Germany, were stuffed with truffles, and sat on little cane chairs. But one might detect in their countenances how they sighed for their easy divans, their simple dishes, and their resinous wine. Then there was a wolf-hunt, and other sport; a great day of gymnasia, many dances and much music; in fact, there were choruses all over the island, and every night was a serenade.

Why such general joy? Because it was understood that the heir-apparent of the isle, their future sovereign, had in fact arrived to make his bow to the beautiful Ephrosyne, though he saw her for the first time.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Very shortly after his arrival at Malta, Mr. Phæbus had spoken to Lothair about Theodora. It appeared that Lucien Campian, though severely wounded, had escaped with Garibaldi after the battle of Mentana into the Italian territories. Here they were at once arrested, but not severely detained, and Colonel Campian took the first opportunity of revisiting England, where, after settling his affairs, he had returned to his native country, from which he had been separated for many years. Mr. Phæbus during the interval had seen a great deal of him, and the colonel departed for America under the impression that Lothair had been among the slain at the final struggle.

"Campian is one of the best men I ever knew," said Phæbus. "He was a remarkable instance of energy combined with softness of disposition. In my opinion, however, he ought never to have visited Europe: he was made to clear the backwoods, and govern man by the power of his hatchet and the mildness of his words. He was fighting for freedom all his life, yet slavery made and slavery destroyed him. Among all the freaks of Fate nothing is more surprising than that this Transatlantic planter should have been ordained to be the husband of a divine being—a true Hellenic goddess, who in the good days would have been worshipped in this country, and have inspired her race to actions of grace, wisdom, and beauty."

"I greatly esteem him," said Lothair, "and I shall write to him directly."

"Except by Campian, who spoke probably about you to no one save myself," continued Phæbus, "your name has never been mentioned with reference to those strange transactions. Once there was a sort of ru-
mor that you had met with some mishap, but these things were contradicted and explained, and then forgotten: and people were all out of town. I believe that Cardinal Grandison communicated with your man of business, and between them every thing was kept quiet, until this portentous account of your doings at Rome, which transpired after we left England and which met us at Malta."

"I have written to my man of business about that," said Lothair, "but I think it will tax all his ingenuity to explain, or to mystify it as successfully as he did the preceding adventures. At any rate, he will not have the assistance of my lord cardinal."

"Theodora was a remarkable woman on many accounts," said Mr. Phæbus, "but particularly on this, that, although one of the most beautiful women that ever existed, she was adored by beautiful women. My wife adored her; Euphrosyne, who has no enthusiasm, adored her; the Princess of Tivoli, the most capricious being probably that ever existed, adored, and always adored, Theodora. I think it must have been that there was on her part a total absence of vanity, and this the more strange in one whose vocation in her earlier life had been to attract and live on popular applause; but I have seen her quit theatres ringing with admiration and enter her carriage with the serenity of a Phidian muse."

"I adored her," said Lothair, "but I never could quite solve her character. Perhaps it was too rich and deep for rapid comprehension."

"We shall never perhaps see her like again," said Mr. Phæbus. "It was a rare combination, peculiar to the Tyrrenian sea. I am satisfied that we must go there to find the pure Hellenic blood, and from thence it got to Rome."

"We may not see her like again, but we may see her again," said Lothair; "and sometimes I think she is always hovering over me."

In this vein, when they were alone, they were frequently speaking of the departed, and one day—it was before the arrival of Prince Agathonides—Mr. Phæbus said to Lothair: "We will ride this morning to what we call the grove of Daphne. It is a real laurel-grove. Some of the trees must be immemorial, and deserve to have been sacred, if once they were not so. In their huge, grotesque forms you would not easily recognize your polished friends of Europe, so trim and glossy and shrub-like. The people are very fond of this grove, and make frequent processions there. Once a year they must be headed by their priest. No one knows why, nor has he the slightest idea of the reason of the various ceremonies which he that day performs. But we know, and some day he or his successors will equally understand them. Yes, if I remain here long enough—and I sometimes think I will never again quit the isle—I shall expect some fine summer night, when there is that rich stillness which the whispering waves only render more intense, to hear a voice of music on the mountains declaring that the god Pan has returned to earth."

It was a picturesque ride, as every ride was on this island, skirting the sylvan hills with the sea glistening in the distance. Lothair was pleased with the approaches to the sacred grove: now and then a single tree with gray branches and a green head, then a great spread of underwood, all laurel, and then spontaneous plantations of young trees.

"There was always a vacant space in the centre of the grove," said Mr. Phæbus, "once sadly overrun with wild shrubs, but I have cleared it and restored the genius of the spot. See!"

They entered the sacred circle and beheld a statue raised on a porphyry pedestal. The light fell with magical effect on the face of the statue. It was the statue of Theodora, the placing of which in the pavilion of Bel- mont Mr. Phæbus was superintending when Lothair first made his acquaintance.

CHAPTER LXXV.

The Prince Agathonides seemed quite to monopolize the attention of Madame Phæbus and her sister. This was not very unreasonable, considering that he was their visi-
tor, the future chief of their house, and had brought them so many embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, choice scents, and fancy dogs. But Lothair thought it quite disgusting, nor could he conceive what they saw in him, what they were talking about or laughing about, for, so far as he had been able to form any opinion on the subject, the prince was a shallow-pated coxcomb without a single quality to charm any woman of sense and spirit. Lothair began to consider how he could pursue his travels, where he should go to, and, when that was settled, how he should get there.

Just at this moment of perplexity, as is often the case, something occurred which 'no one could foresee, but which, like every event, removed some difficulties and introduced others.

There arrived at the island a dispatch forwarded to Mr. Phœbus by the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, who had received it from his colleague at London. This dispatch contained a proposition to Mr. Phœbus to repair to the court of St. Petersburg, and accept appointments of high distinction and emolument. Without in any way restricting the independent pursuit of his profession, he was offered a large salary, the post of court painter, and the presidency of the Academy of Fine Arts. Of such moment did the Russian Government deem the official presence of this illustrious artist in their country, that it was intimated, if the arrangement could be effectuated, its conclusion might be celebrated by conferring on Mr. Phœbus a patent of nobility and a decoration of a high class. The dispatch contained a private letter from an exalted member of the imperial family, who had had the high and gratifying distinction of making Mr. Phœbus's acquaintance in London, personally pressing the acceptance by him of the general proposition, assuring him of cordial welcome and support, and informing Mr. Phœbus that what was particularly desired at this moment was a series of paintings illustrative of some of the most memorable scenes in the Holy Land and especially the arrival of the pilgrims of the Greek rite at Jerusalem. As for this purpose he would probably like to visit Pales-
tine, the whole of the autumn or even a longer period was placed at his disposal; so that, enriched with all necessary drawings and studies, he might achieve his more elaborate performances in Russia at his leisure and with every advantage.

Considering that the great objects in life with Mr. Phœbus were to live in an Aryan country, amid an Aryan race, and produce works which should revive for the benefit of human nature Aryan creeds, a proposition to pass some of the prime years of his life among the Mongolian race, and at the same time devote his pencil to the celebration of Semitic subjects, was startling.

"I shall say nothing to Madame Phœbus until the prince has gone," he remarked to Lothair; "he will go the day after to-morrow. I do not know what they may offer to make me—probably only a baron, perhaps a count. But you know in Russia a man may become a prince, and I certainly should like those Cantacuzenes to feel that after all their daughter is a princess with no thanks to them. The climate is detestable, but one owes much to one's profession. Art would be honored at a great, perhaps the greatest, court. There would not be a fellow at his easel in the streets about Fitzroy Square who would not be prouder. I wonder what the decoration will be? 'Of a high class'—vague. It might be Alexander Newsky. You know you have a right, whatever your decoration, to have it expressed, of course at your own expense, in brilliants. I confess I have my weaknesses. I should like to get over to the Academy dinner—one can do any thing in these days of railroads—and dine with the R.A.s in my ribbon and the star of the Alexander Newsky in brilliants. I think every academician would feel elevated. What I detest are their Semitic subjects—nothing but drapery. They cover even their heads in those scorching climes. Can any one make any thing of a caravan of pilgrims? To be sure, they say no one can draw a camel. If I went to Jerusalem, a camel would at last be drawn. There is something in that. We must think over these things, and when the prince has gone talk it over with Madame Phœbus. I wish you all to come to a wise decision, without
the slightest reference to my individual tastes
or, it may be, prejudices."

The result of all this was that Mr. Phæbus, without absolutely committing himself, favorably entertained the general proposition of the Russian court; while, with respect to their particular object in art, he agreed to visit Palestine and execute at least one work for his imperial friend and patron. He counted on reaching Jerusalem before the Easter pilgrims returned to their homes.

"If they would make me a prince at once, and give me the Alexander Newsky in brilliants, it might be worth thinking of," he said to Lothair.

The ladies, though they loved their isle, were quite delighted with the thought of going to Jerusalem. Madame Phæbus knew a Russian grand-duchess who had boasted to her that she had been both to Jerusalem and Torquay, and Madame Phæbus had felt quite ashamed that she had been to neither.

"I suppose you will feel quite at home there," said Euphrosyne to Lothair.

"No; I never was there."

"No; but you know all about those places and people—holy places and holy persons. The Blessed Virgin did not, I believe, appear to you. It was to a young lady, was it not? We were asking each other last night who the young lady could be."

CHAPTER LXXVI.

Time, which changes every thing, is changing even the traditionary appearance of forlorn Jerusalem. Not that its mien, after all, was ever very sad. Its airy site, its splendid mosque, its vast monasteries, the bright material of which the whole city is built, its cupolaed houses of freestone, and above all the towers and gates and battlements of its lofty and complete walls, always rendered it a handsome city. Jerusalem has not been sacked so often or so recently as the other two great ancient cities, Rome and Athens. Its vicissitude was never more desolate than the Campagna, or the state of Attica and the Morea in 1830.

The battle-field of western Asia from the days of the Assyrian kings to those of Mehemet Ali, Palestine endured the same devastation as in modern times has been the, doom of Flanders and the Milanese; but the years of havoc in the Low Countries and Lombardy must be counted in Palestine by centuries. Yet the wide plains of the Holy Land, Sharon, and Shechem, and Esdraelon, have recovered; they are as fertile and as fair as in old days; it is the hill-culture that has been destroyed, and that is the culture on which Jerusalem mainly depended. Its hills were terraced gardens, vineyards, and groves of olive-trees. And here it is that we find renovation. The terraces are again ascending the stony heights, and the eye is frequently gladdened with young plantations. Fruit-trees, the peach and the pomegranate, the almond and the fig, offer gracious groups; and the true children of the land, the vine and the olive, are again exulting in their native soil.

There is one spot, however, which has been neglected, and yet the one that should have been the first remembered, as it has been the most rudely wasted. Blessed be the hand which plants trees upon Olivet! Blessed be the hand that builds gardens about Sion!

The most remarkable creation, however, in modern Jerusalem is the Russian settlement which within a few years has risen on the elevated ground on the western side of the city. The Latin, the Greek, and the Armenian Churches had for centuries possessed enclosed establishments in the city, which, under the name of monasteries, provided shelter and protection for hundreds—it might be said even thousands—of pilgrims belonging to their respective rites. The great scale, therefore, on which Russia secured hospitality for her subjects was not in reality so remarkable as the fact that it seemed to indicate a settled determination to separate the Muscovite Church altogether from the Greek, and throw off what little dependence is still acknowledged on the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Whatever the motive, the design has been accomplished on a large scale. The Russian buildings, all well defended, are a caravanserai, a cathedral, a citadel. The consular flag crowns the height
and indicates the office of administration; priests and monks are permanent inhabitants, and a whole caravan of Muscovite pilgrims and the trades on which they depend can be accommodated within the precinct.

Mr. Phæbus, his family and suite, were to be the guests of the Russian consul, and every preparation was made to insure the celebrated painter a becoming reception. Frequent telegrams had duly impressed the representative of all the Russians in the Holy Land with the importance of his impending visitor. Even the qualified and strictly provisional acceptance of the Russian proposition by Mr. Phæbus had agitated the wires of Europe scarcely less than a suggested conference.

"An artist should always remember what he owes to posterity and his profession," said Mr. Phæbus to Lothair, as they were walking the deck, "even if you can distinguish between them, which I doubt, for it is only by a sense of the beautiful that the human family can be sustained in its proper place in the scale of creation, and the sense of the beautiful is a result of the study of the fine arts. It would be something to sow the seeds of organic change in the Mongolian type, but I am not sanguine of success. There is no original fund of aptitude to act upon. The most ancient of existing communities is Turanian, and yet, though they could invent gunpowder and the mariner's compass, they never could understand perspective.—Man ahead there! tell Madame Phæbus to come on deck for the first sight of Mount Lebanon."

When the Pan entered the port of Joppa they observed another English yacht in those waters; but, before they could speculate on its owner, they were involved in all the complications of landing. On the quay, the Russian vice-consul was in attendance with horses and mules, and donkeys handsomer than either. The ladies were delighted with the vast orange-gardens of Joppa, which Madame Phæbus said realized quite her idea of the Holy Land.

"I was prepared for milk and honey," said Euphrosyne, "but this is too delightful," as she travelled through lanes of date-bearing palm-trees, and sniffed with her almond-shaped nostrils the all-pervading fragrance.

They passed the night at Arimathaea, a pretty village surrounded with gardens enclosed with hedges of prickly pear. Here they found hospitality in an old convent, but all the comforts of Europe and many of the refinements of Asia had been forwarded for their accommodation.

"It is a great homage to art," said Mr. Phæbus, as he scattered his gold like a great seigneur of Gascony.

The next day, two miles from Jerusalem, the consul met them with a cavalcade, and the ladies assured their host that they were not at all wearied with their journey, but were quite prepared, in due time, to join his dinner-party, which he was most anxious they should attend, as he had "two English lords" who had arrived, and whom he had invited to meet them. They were all curious to know their names, though that, unfortunately, the consul could not tell them, but he had sent to the English consulate to have them written down. All he could assure them was, that they were real English lords, not travelling English lords, but in sober earnestness great personages.

Mr. Phæbus was highly gratified. He was pleased with his reception. There was nothing he liked much more than a procession. He was also a sincere admirer of the aristocracy of his country. "On the whole," he would say, "they most resemble the old Hellenic race; excelling in athletic sports, speaking no other language than their own, and never reading."

"Your fault," he would sometimes say to Lothair, "and the cause of many of your sorrows, is the habit of mental introspection. Man is born to observe, but if he falls into psychology he observes nothing, and then he is astonished that life has no charm for him, or that, never seizing the occasion, his career is a failure. No, sir, it is the eye that must be occupied and cultivated; no one knows the capacity of the eye who has not developed it, or the visions of beauty and delight and inexhaustible interest which it commands. To a man who observes, life is as different as the existence of a dreaming
psychologist is to that of the animals of the field.”

“I fear,” said Lothair, “that I have at length found out the truth, and that I am a dreaming psychologist.”

“You are young and not irremediably lost,” said Mr. Phœbus. “Fortunately, you have received the admirable though partial education of your class. You are a good shot, you can ride, you can row, you can swim. That imperfect secretion of the brain which is called thought has not yet bowed your frame. You have not had time to read much. Give it up altogether. The conversation of a woman like Theodora is worth all the libraries in the world. If it were only for her sake, I should wish to save you, but I wish to do it for your own. Yes, profit by the vast though calamitous experience which you have gained in a short time. We may know a great deal about our bodies, we can know very little about our minds.”

The “real English lords” turned out to be Bertram and St. Aldegonde returning from Nubia. They had left England about the same time as Lothair, and had paired together on the Irish Church till Easter, with a sort of secret hope on the part of St. Aldegonde that they might neither of them reappear in the House of Commons again until the Irish Church were either saved or subverted. Holy Week had long passed, and they were at Jerusalem, not quite so near the House of Commons as the Reform Club or the Carlton, but still St. Aldegonde had mentioned that he was beginning to be bored with Jerusalem, and Bertram counted on their immediate departure when they accepted the invitation to dine with the Russian consul.

Lothair was unaffectedly delighted to meet Bertram, and glad to see St. Aldegonde, but he was a little nervous and embarrassed as to the probable tone of his reception by them. But their manner relieved him in an instant, for he saw they knew nothing of his adventures.

“Well,” said St. Aldegonde, “what have you been doing with yourself since we last met? I wish you had come with us, and had a shot at a crocodile.”

Bertram told Lothair in the course of the evening that he found letters at Cairo from Corisande, on his return, in which there was a good deal about Lothair, and which had made him rather uneasy. “That there was a rumor you had been badly wounded, and some other things,” and Bertram looked him full in the face; “but I dare say not a word of truth.”

“I was never better in my life,” said Lothair, “and I have been in Sicily and in Greece. However, we will talk over all this another time.”

The dinner at the consulate was one of the most successful banquets that was ever given, if to please your guests be the test of good fortune in such enterprises. St. Aldegonde was perfectly charmed with the Phœbus family; he did not know which to admire most—the great artist, who was in remarkable spirits to-day, considering he was in a Semitic country, or his radiant wife, or his brilliant sister-in-law. St. Aldegonde took an early opportunity of informing Bertram that if he liked to go over and vote for the Irish Church he would release him from his pair with the greatest pleasure, but for his part he had not the slightest intention of leaving Jerusalem at present. Strange to say, Bertram received this intimation without a murmur. He was not so loud in his admiration of the Phœbus family as St. Aldegonde, but there is a silent sentiment sometimes more expressive than the noisiest applause, and more dangerous. Bertram had sat next to Euphrosyne, and was entirely spell-bound.

The consul’s wife, a hostess not unworthy of such guests, had entertained her friends in the European style. The dinner-hour was not late, and the gentlemen who attended the ladies from the dinner-table were allowed to remain some time in the saloon. Lothair talked much to the consul’s wife, by whose side sat Madame Phœbus. St. Aldegonde was always on his legs, distracted by the rival attractions of that lady and her husband. More remote, Bertram whispered to Euphrosyne, who answered him with laughing eyes.

At a certain hour, the consul, attended by his male guests, crossing a court, proceeded to his divan, a lofty and capacious
chamber painted in fresco, and with no furniture except the low but broad raised seat that surrounded the room. Here, when they were seated, an equal number of attendants—Arabs in Arab dress, blue gowns, and red slippers, and red caps—entered, each proffering a long pipe of cherry or jasmine wood. Then, in a short time, guests dropped in, and pipes and coffee were immediately brought to them. Any person who had been formally presented to the consul had this privilege, without any further invitation. This society often found in these consular divans in the more remote places of the East—Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem—is often extremely entertaining and instructive. Celebrated travellers, distinguished men of science, artists, adventurers who ultimately turn out to be heroes, eccentric characters of all kinds, are here encountered, and give the fruits of their original or experienced observation without reserve.

"It is the smoking-room over again," whispered St. Aldegonde to Lothair, "only in England one is so glad to get away from the women, but here I must say I should have liked to remain behind."

An individual in a Syrian dress, fawn-colored robes girdled with a rich shawl, and a white turban, entered. He made his salute with grace and dignity to the consul, touching his forehead, his lip, and his heart, and took his seat with the air of one not accustomed to be received, playing, until he received his chibouque, with a chaplet of beads.

"That is a good-looking fellow, Lothair," said St. Aldegonde; "or is it the dress that turns them out such swells? I feel quite a lout by some of these fellows."

"I think he would be good-looking in any dress," said Lothair. "A remarkable countenance."

It was an oval visage, with features in harmony with that form; large dark-brown eyes and lashes, and brows delicately but completely defined; no hair upon the face except a beard, full but not long. He seemed about the same age as Mr. Phœbus, and his complexion, though pale, was clear and fair.

The conversation, after some rambling, had got upon the Suez Canal. Mr. Phœbus did not care for the political or the commercial consequences of that great enterprise, but he was glad that a natural division should be established between the greater races and the Ethiopian. It might not lead to any considerable result, but it asserted a principle. He looked upon that trench as a protest.

"But would you place the Nilotic family in the Ethiopian race?" inquired the Syrian in a voice commanding from its deep sweetness.

"I would certainly. They were Cushim, and that means negroes."

The Syrian did not agree with Mr. Phœbus; he stated his views firmly and clearly, but without urging them. He thought that we must look to the Pelasgi as the colonizing race that had peopled and produced Egypt. The mention of the Pelasgi fired Mr. Phœbus to even unusual eloquence. He denounced the Pelasgi as a barbarous race: men of gloomy superstitions, who, had it not been for the Hellenes, might have fatally arrested the human development. The triumph of the Hellenes was the triumph of the beautiful, and all that is great and good in life was owing to their victory.

"It is difficult to ascertain what is great in life," said the Syrian, "because nations differ on the subject and ages. Some, for example, consider war to be a great thing, others condemn it. I remember also when patriotism was a boast, and now it is a controversy. But it is not so difficult to ascertain what is good. For man has in his own being some guide to such knowledge, and divine aid to acquire it has not been wanting to him. For my part I could not maintain that the Hellenic system led to virtue."

The conversation was assuming an ardent character when the consul, as a diplomatist, turned the channel. Mr. Phœbus had indicated the Hellenic religion, the Syrian, with a terse protest against the religion of Nature, however idealized, as tending to the corruption of man, had let the question die away, and the Divan were discussing dromedaries, and dancing-girls, and sherbet made of pomegranate, which the consul recommended and ordered to be produced. Some of the guests retired, and among them the Syrian
with the same salute and the same graceful dignity as had distinguished his entrance.

"Who is that man?" said Mr. Phæbus.

"I met him at Rome ten years ago. Baron Mecklenburg brought him to me to paint for my great picture of St. John, which is in the gallery of Munich. He said in his way—you remember his way—that he would bring me a face of Paradise."

"I cannot exactly tell you his name," said the consul. "Prince Galitzin brought him here, and thought highly of him. I believe he is one of the old Syrian families in the mountain; but whether he be a Maronite or a Druse, or any thing else, I really cannot say. Now try the sherbet."  

CHAPTER LXXVII.

There are few things finer than the morning view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. The fresh and golden light falls on a walled city with turrets and towers and frequent gates: the houses of freestone, with terraced or oval roofs, sparkle in the sun, while the cupolaed pile of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the vast monasteries, and the broad steep of Sion crowned with the tower of David, vary the monotony of the general masses of building. But the glory of the scene is the Mosque of Omar as it rises on its broad platform of marble from the deep ravine of Kedron, with its magnificent dome high in the air, its arches and gardened courts, and its crescents glittering amid the cedar, the cypress, and the palm.

Reclining on Olivet, Lothair, alone and in charmed abstraction, gazed on the wondrous scene. Since his arrival at Jerusalem he lived much apart, nor had he found difficulty in effecting this isolation. Mr. Phæbus had already established a studio on a considerable scale, and was engaged in making sketches of pilgrims and monks, tall donkeys of Bethlehem with starry fronts, in which he much delighted, and grave Jellaheen sheiks, who were hanging about the convents in the hopes of obtaining a convoy to the Dead Sea. As for St. Aldegonde and Bertram, they passed their lives at the Russian consulate, or with its most charming inhabitants. This morning, with the consul and his wife and the matchless sisters, as St. Aldegonde always termed them, they had gone on an excursion to the Convent of the Nativity. Dinner usually reassembled all the party, and then the Divan followed.

"I say, Bertram," said St. Aldegonde, "what a lucky thing we paired and went to Nubia! I rejoice in the Divan, and yet, somehow, I cannot bear leaving those women. If the matchless sisters would only smoke, by Jove they would be perfect!"

"I should not like Euphrosyne to smoke," said Bertram.

A person approached Lothair by the pathway from Bethany. It was the Syrian gentleman whom he had met at the consulate. As he was passing Lothair, he saluted him with the grace which had been before remarked, and Lothair, who was by nature courteous, and even inclined a little to ceremony in his manners, especially with those with whom he was not intimate, immediately rose, as he would not receive such a salutation in a reclining posture.

"Let me not disturb you," said the stranger, "or, if we must be on equal terms, let me also be seated, for this is a view that never palls."

"It is perhaps familiar to you," said Lothair, "but with me, only a pilgrim, its effect is fascinating, almost overwhelming."

"The view of Jerusalem never becomes familiar," said the Syrian, "for its associations are so transcendent, so various, so inexhaustible, that the mind can never anticipate its course of thought and feeling, when one sits, as we do now, on this immortal mount."

"I presume you live here?" said Lothair.

"Not exactly," said his companion. "I have recently built a house without the walls, and I have planted my hill with fruit-trees and made vineyards and olive-grounds, but I have done this as much—perhaps more—to set an example, which, I am glad to say, has been followed, as for my own convenience or pleasure. My home is in the north of Palestine, on the other side of..."
Jordan, beyond the Sea of Galilee. My family has dwelt there from time immemorial; but they always loved this city, and have a legend that they dwelt occasionally within its walls, even in the days when Titus from that hill looked down upon the temple.

"I have often wished to visit the Sea of Galilee," said Lothair.

"Well, you have now an opportunity," said the Syrian; "the north of Palestine, though it has no tropical splendor, has much variety and a peculiar natural charm. The burst and brightness of spring have not yet quite vanished; you would find our plains radiant with wild-flowers, and our hills green with young crops; and, though we cannot rival Lebanon, we have forest-glades among our famous hills that, when once seen, are remembered."

"But there is something to me more interesting than the splendor of tropical scenery," said Lothair, "even if Galilee could offer it. I wish to visit the cradle of my faith."

"And you would do wisely," said the Syrian, "for there is no doubt the spiritual nature of man is developed in this land."

"And yet there are persons at the present day who doubt—even deny—the spiritual nature of man," said Lothair. "I do not, I could not—there are reasons why I could not."

"There are some things I know, and some things I believe," said the Syrian. "I know that I have a soul, and I believe that it is immortal."

"It is science that, by demonstrating the insignificance of this globe in the vast scale of creation, has led to this infidelity," said Lothair.

"Science may prove the insignificance of this globe in the scale of creation," said the stranger, "but it cannot prove the insignificance of man. What is the earth compared with the sun? a molehill by a mountain; yet the inhabitants of this earth can discover the elements of which the great orb consists, and will probably ere long ascertain all the conditions of its being. Nay, the human mind can penetrate far beyond the sun. There is no relation, therefore, between the faculties of man and the scale in creation of the planet which he inhabits."

"I was glad to hear you assert the other night the spiritual nature of man in opposition to Mr. Phæbus."

"Ah! Mr. Phæbus!" said the stranger, with a smile. "He is an old acquaintance of mine. And I must say he is very consistent—except in paying a visit to Jerusalem. That does surprise me. He said to me the other night the same things as he said to me at Rome many years ago. He would revive the worship of Nature. The deities whom he so eloquently describes and so exquisitely delineates are the ideal personifications of the most eminent human qualities, and chiefly the physical. Physical beauty is his standard of excellence, and he has a fanciful theory that moral order would be the consequence of the worship of physical beauty, for without moral order he holds physical beauty cannot be maintained. But the answer to Mr. Phæbus is, that his system has been tried and has failed, and under conditions more favorable than are likely to exist again; the worship of Nature ended in the degradation of the human race.

"But Mr. Phæbus cannot really believe in Apollo and Venus," said Lothair. "These are phrases. He is, I suppose, what is called a Pantheist."

"No doubt the Olympus of Mr. Phæbus is the creation of his fancy," replied the Syrian. "I should not, however, describe him as a Pantheist, whose creed requires more abstraction than Mr. Phæbus, the worshipper of Nature, would tolerate. His school never care to pursue any investigation which cannot be followed by the eye—and the worship of the beautiful always ends in an orgy. As for Pantheism, it is Atheism in domino. The belief in a Creator who is unconscious of creating is more monstrous than any dogma of any Church in this city, and we have them all here."

"But there are people now who tell you that there never was any Creation, and therefore there never could have been a Creator," said Lothair.

"And which is now advanced with the confidence of novelty," said the Syrian,
"though all of it has been urged, and vainly urged, thousands of years ago. There must be design, or all we see would be without sense, and I do not believe in the unmeaning. As for the natural forces to which all creation is now attributed, we know they are unconscious, while consciousness is as inevitable a portion of our existence as the eye or the hand. The conscious cannot be derived from the unconscious. Man is divine."

"I wish I could assure myself of the personality of the Creator," said Lothair. "I cling to that, but they say it is unphilosophical."

"In what sense?" asked the Syrian. "Is it more unphilosophical to believe in a personal God, omnipotent and omniscient, than in natural forces unconscious and irresistible? Is it unphilosophical to combine power with intelligence? Goethe, a Spinozist, who did not believe in Spinoza, said that he could bring his mind to the conception that in the centre of space we might meet with a monad of pure intelligence. What may be the centre of space I leave to the daedal imagination of the author of 'Faust'; but a monad of pure intelligence— is that more philosophical than the truth, first revealed to man amid these everlasting hills," said the Syrian, "that God made man in His own image?"

"I have often found in that assurance a source of sublime consolation," said Lothair. "It is the charter of the nobility of man," said the Syrian, "one of the divine dogmas revealed in this land; not the invention of councils, not one of which was held on this sacred soil, confused assemblies first got together by the Greeks, and then by barbarous nations in barbarous times."

"Yet the divine land no longer tells us divine things," said Lothair. "It may or it may not have fulfilled its destiny," said the Syrian. "'In my Father's house are many mansions,' and by the various families of nations the designs of the Creator are accomplished. God works by races, and one was appointed in due season and after many developments to reveal and expound in this land the spiritual nature of man. The Aryan and the Semite are of the same blood and origin, but when they quitted their central land they were ordained to follow opposite courses. Each division of the great race has developed one portion of the double nature of humanity, till, after all their wanderings, they met again, and, represented by their two choicest families, the Hellenes and the Hebrews, brought together the treasures of their accumulated wisdom, and secured the civilization of man."

"Those among whom I have lived of late," said Lothair, "have taught me to trust much in councils, and to believe that without them there could be no foundation for the Church. I observe you do not speak in that vein, though, like myself, you find solace in those dogmas which recognize the relations between the created and the Creator."

"There can be no religion without that recognition," said the Syrian, "and no creed can possibly be devised without such a recognition that would satisfy man. Why we are here, whence we come, whither we go—these are questions which man is organically framed and forced to ask himself, and that would not be the case if they could not be answered. As for churches depending on councils, the first council was held more than three centuries after the Sermon on the Mount. We Syrians had churches in the interval: no one can deny that. I bow before the Divine decree that swept them away from Antloch to Jerusalem, but I am not yet prepared to transfer my spiritual allegiance to Italian popes and Greek patriarchs. We believe that our family were among the first followers of Jesus, and that we then held lands in Bashan which we hold now. We had a gospel once in our district where there was some allusion to this, and being written by neighbors, and probably at the time, I dare say it was accurate, but the Western Churches declared our gospel was not authentic, though why I cannot tell, and they succeeded in extirpating it. It was not an additional reason why we should enter into their fold. So I am content to dwell in Galilee and trace the footsteps of my Divine
Master, musing over His life and pregnant sayings amid the mountains He sanctified and the waters He loved so well.”

The sun was now rising in the heavens, and the hour had arrived when it became expedient to seek the shade. Lothair and the Syrian rose at the same time.

“I shall not easily forget our conversation on the Mount of Olives,” said Lothair, “and I would ask you to add to this kindness by permitting me, before I leave Jerusalem, to pay my respects to you under your roof.”

“Peace be with you!” said the Syrian. “I live without the gate of Damascus, on a hill which you will easily recognize, and my name is Paraclete.”

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Time passed very agreeably to St. Aldegonde and Bertram at Jerusalem, for it was passed entirely at the Russian consulate, or with its interesting and charming inmates, who were always making excursions, or, as they styled them, pilgrimages. They saw little of Lothair, who would willingly have conversed with his friend on many topics, but his friend was almost always engaged, and, if by some chance they succeeded in finding themselves alone, Bertram appeared to be always preoccupied. One day he said to Lothair: “I tell you what, old fellow, if you want to know all about what has happened at home, I will give you Corisande’s letters. They are a sort of journal which she promised to keep for me, and they will tell you every thing. I found an immense packet of them on our return from Cairo, and I meant to have read them here; but I do not know how it is—I suppose there is so much to be seen here—but I never seem to have a moment to myself. I have got an engagement now to the consulate. We are going to Elisha’s Fountain to-day. Why do not you come?”

“Well, I am engaged too,” said Lothair. “I have settled to go to the Tombs of the Kings to-day, with Signor Paraclete, and I cannot well get off; but remember the letters.”

The box of letters arrived at Lothair’s rooms in due season, and their perusal deeply interested him. In their pages, alike earnest and lively, and a picture of a mind of high intelligence adorned with fancy and feeling, the name of Lothair frequently appeared, and sometimes accompanied with expressions that made his heart beat. All the rumors of his adventures, as they gradually arrived in England, generally distorted, were duly chronicled, and sometimes with comments, which intimated the interest they occasioned to the correspondent of Bertram. More than once she could not refrain from reproaching her brother for having left his friend so much to himself. “Of all your friends,” she said, “the one who always most interested me, and seemed most worthy of your affection.” And then she deplored the absolute ruin of Lothair, for such she deemed his entrance into the Roman Church.

“I was right in my appreciation of that woman, though I was utterly inexperienced in life,” thought Lothair. “If her mother had only favored my views two years ago, affairs would have been different. Would they have been better? Can they be worse? But I have gained experience. Certainly; and paid for it with my heart’s blood. And might I not have gained experience tranquilly, in the discharge of the duties of my position at home—dear home? Perhaps not. And suppose I never had gained experience, I still might have been happy? And what am I now? Most lone and sad. So lone and sad that nothing but the magical influence of the scene around me saves me from an overwhelming despondency.”

Lothair passed his life chiefly with Paraclete, and, a few weeks after their first acquaintance, they left Jerusalem together for Galilee.

The month of May had disappeared, and June was advancing. Bertram and Saint Aldegonde no longer talked about their pair, and their engagements in the House of Commons. There seemed a tacit understanding between them to avoid the subject; remarkable on the part of Bertram, for he had
always been urgent on his brother-in-law to fulfill their parliamentary obligation.

The party at the Russian consulate had gone on a grand expedition to the Dead Sea, and had been absent for many days from Jerusalem. They were conveyed by one of the sheiks of the Jordan valley. It was a most successful expedition—constant adventure, novel objects and habits, all the spell of a romantic life. The ladies were delighted with the scenery of the Jordan valley, and the gentlemen had good sport; St. Aldegonde had killed a wild-boar, and Bertram an ibex, whose horns were preserved for Brentham. Mr. Phæbus intensely studied the camel and its habits. He persuaded himself that the ship of the desert entirely understood him. “But it is always so,” he added. “There is no animal that in a week does not perfectly comprehend me. Had I time and could give myself up to it, I have no doubt I could make them speak. Nature has endued me, so far as dumb animals are concerned, with a peculiar mesmeric power.”

At last this happy caravan was again within sight of the walls of Jerusalem.

“I should like to have remained in the valley of the Jordan forever,” said St. Aldegonde.

“And so should I,” whispered Bertram to Euphrosyne, “with the same companions.”

When they had returned to the consulate, they found the post from England had arrived during their absence. There were dispatches for all. It is an agitating moment—that arrival of letters in a distant land. Lord St. Aldegonde seemed much disturbed when he tore open and perused his. His countenance became clouded; he dashed his hand through his dishevelled locks; he pouted; and then he said to Bertram, “Come to my room.”

“Any thing wrong at home?”

“Not at home,” said St. Aldegonde. “Bertha is all right. But a most infernal letter from Glyn—most insolent. If I do return I will vote against them. But I will not return. I have made up my mind to that. People are so selfish,” exclaimed St. Aldegonde, with indignation. “They never think of any thing but themselves.”

“Show me his letter,” said Bertram. “I have got a letter too; it is from the duke.”

The letter of the Opposition whip did not deserve the epithets ascribed to it by St. Aldegonde. It was urgent and courteously peremptory; but, considering the circumstances of the case, by no means too absolute. Paired to Easter by great indulgence, St. Aldegonde was passing Whitsunday at Jerusalem. The parliamentary position was critical, and the future of the Opposition seemed to depend on the majority by which their resolutions on the Irish Church were sent up to the House of Lords.

“Well,” said Bertram. “I see nothing to complain of in that letter. Except a little more urgency, it is almost the same language as reached us at Cairo, and then you said Glyn was a capital fellow, and seemed quite pleased.”

“Yes, because I hated Egypt,” said St. Aldegonde. “I hated the pyramids, and I was disappointed with the dancing-girls; and it seemed to me that, if it had not been for the whip, we never should have been able to escape. But things are very different now.”

“Yes, they are,” said Bertram, in a melancholy tone.

“You do not think of returning?” said St. Aldegonde.

“Instantly,” replied Bertram. “I have a letter from the duke which is peremptory. The county is dissatisfied with my absence. And mine is a queer constituency; very numerous and several large towns; the popularity of my family gained me the seat, not their absolute influence.”

“My constituents never trouble me,” said St. Aldegonde.

“You have none,” said Bertram.

“Well, if I were member for a metropolitan district I would not budge. And I little thought you would have deserted me.”

“Ah!” sighed Bertram. “You are discontented, because your amusements are interrupted. But think of my position, torn from a woman whom I adore.”

“Well, you know you must have left her sooner or later,” urged St. Aldegonde.

“Why?” asked Bertram.
"You know what Lothair told us. She is engaged to her cousin the Prince of Samos, and—"

"If I had only the Prince of Samos to deal with, I should care little," said Bertram.
"Why, what do you mean?"
"That Euphrosyne is mine, if my family will sanction our union, but not otherwise."

St. Aldegonde gave a long whistle, and he added, "I wish Bertha were here. She is the only person I know who has a head."

"You see, my dear Granville, while you are talking of your little disappointments, I am involved in awful difficulties."

"You are sure about the Prince of Samos?"

"Clear your head of that. There is no engagement of any kind between him and Euphrosyne. The visit to the island was only a preliminary ceremony—just to show himself. No doubt the father wishes the alliance; nor is there any reason to suppose that it would be disagreeable to the son; but, I repeat it—no engagement exists."

"If I were not your brother-in-law, I should have been very glad to have married Euphrosyne myself," said St. Aldegonde.

"Yes, but what am I to do?" asked Bertram, rather impatiently.

"It will not do to write to Brentham," said St. Aldegonde, gravely; "that I see clearly." Then, after musing a while, he added: "I am vexed to leave our friends here and shall miss them sadly. They are the most agreeable people I ever knew. I never enjoyed myself so much. But we must think of nothing but your affairs. We must return instantly. The whip will be an excuse, but the real business will be Euphrosyne. I should delight in having her for a sister-in-law, but the affair will require management. We can make short work of getting home: steam to Marseilles, leave the yacht there, and take the railroad. I have half a mind to telegraph to Bertha to meet us there. She would be of great use."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

Lothair was delighted with Galilee, and particularly with the blue waters of its lake slumbering beneath the surrounding hills. Of all its once pleasant towns, Tiberias alone remains, and that in ruins from a recent earthquake. But where are Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum? A group of hovels and an ancient tower still bear the magic name of Magdala, and all around are green mounts and gentle slopes, the scenes of miracles that softened the heart of man, and of sermons that never tire his ear. Dreams passed over Lothair of settling forever on the shores of these waters, and of reproducing all their vanished happiness: rebuilding their memorable cities, reviving their fisheries, cultivating the plain of Gennesaret and the country of the Gadarenes, and making researches in this cradle of pure and primitive Christianity.

The heritage of Paraclete was among the oaks of Bashan, a lofty land, rising suddenly from the Jordan valley, verdant and well watered, and clothed in many parts with forest; there the host of Lothair resided among his lands and people, and himself dwelt in a stone and castellated building, a portion of which was of immemorial antiquity, and where he could rally his forces and defend himself in case of the irruption and invasion of the desert tribes. And here one morn arrived a messenger from Jerusalem summoning Lothair back to that city, in consequence of the intended departure of his friends.

The call was urgent, and was obeyed immediately with that promptitude which the manners of the East, requiring no preparation, admit. Paraclete accompanied his guest. They had to cross the Jordan, and then to trace their way till they reached the southern limit of the plain of Esdraelon, from whence they counted on the following day to reach Jerusalem. While they were encamped on this spot, a body of Turkish soldiery seized all their horses, which were required, they said, by the Pacha of Damascus, who was proceeding to Jerusalem, at-
tending a great Turkish general, who was on a mission to examine the means of defence of Palestine on the Egyptian side. This was very vexatious, but one of those incidents of Eastern life against which it is impossible to contend; so Lothair and Paraclete were obliged to take refuge in their pipes beneath a huge and solitary sycamore-tree, awaiting the arrival of the Ottoman magnificoes.

They came at last, a considerable force of cavalry, then mules and barbarous carriages with the harem, all the riders and inmates enveloped in what appeared to be winding-sheets, white and shapeless; about them eunuchs and servants. The staff of the pachas followed, preceding the grandees who closed the march, mounted on Anatolian chargers.

Paraclete and Lothair had been obliged to leave the grateful shade of the sycamore-tree, as the spot had been fixed on by the commander of the advanced guard for the resting-place of the pachas. They were standing aside and watching the progress of the procession, and contemplating the earliest opportunity of representing their grievances to high authority, when the Turkish general, or the seraskier, as the Syrians inaccurately styled him, suddenly reined in his steed, and said, in a loud voice, "Captain Muriel!"

Lothair recognized the well-known voice of his commanding officer in the Apennine, and advanced to him with a military salute. "I must first congratulate you on being alive, which I hardly hoped," said the general. "Then let me know why you are here."

And Lothair told him. "Well, you shall have back your horses," said the general; "and I will escort you to El Khuds. In the mean time you must be our guest;" and he presented him to the Pacha of Damascus with some form. "You and I have bivonacked in the open air before this, and not in so bland a clime."

Beneath the shade of the patriarchal sycamore, the general narrated to Lothair his adventures since they were fellow-combatants on the fatal field of Mentana.

"When all was over," continued the general, "I fled with Garibaldi, and gained the Italian frontier at Terni. Here we were of course arrested by the authorities, but not very maliciously. I escaped one morning, and got among the mountains in the neighborhood of our old camp. I had to wander about these parts for some time, for the Papalini were in the vicinity, and there was danger. It was a hard time; but I found a friend now and then among the country people, though they are dreadfully superstitious. At last I got to the shore, and induced an honest fellow to put to sea in an open boat, on the chance of something turning up. It did, in the shape of a brigantine from Elba bound for Corfu. Here I was sure to find friends, for the brotherhood are strong in the Ionian Isles. And I began to look about for business. The Greeks made me some offers, but their schemes were all vanity, worse than the Irish. You remember our Fenian squabble? From something that transpired, I had made up my mind, so soon as I was well equipped, to go to Turkey. I had had some transactions with the house of Cantacuzene, through the kindness of our dear friend whom we will never forget, but will never mention; and through them I became acquainted with the Prince of Samos, who is the chief of their house. He is in the entire confidence of Aali Pacha. I soon found out that there was real business on the carpet. The Ottoman army, after many trials and vicissitudes, is now in good case; and the Porte has resolved to stand no more nonsense either in this direction—or in any other. But they wanted a general; they wanted a man who knew his business. I am not a Garibaldi, you know, and never pretended to be. I have no genius, or volcanic fire, or that sort of thing; but I do presume to say, with fair troops, paid with tolerable regularity, a battery or two of rifled cannon, and a well-organized commissariat, I am not afraid of meeting any captain of my acquaintance, whatever his land or language. The Turks are a brave people, and there is nothing in their system, political or religious, which
jars with my convictions. In the army, which is all that I much care for, there is the career of merit, and I can promote any able man that I recognize. As for their religion, they are tolerant and exact nothing from me; and if I had any religion except Madre Natura, I am not sure I would not prefer Islamism; which is at least simple, and as little sacerdotal as any organized creed can be. The Porte made me a liberal offer, and I accepted it. It so happened that, the moment I entered their service, I was wanted. They had a difficulty on their Dalmatian frontier; I settled it in a way they liked. And now I am sent here with full powers, and am a pacha of the highest class, and with a prospect of some warm work. I do not know what your views are, but, if you would like a little more soldiering, I will put you on my staff; and, for ought I know, we may find your winter-quarters at Grand Cairo—they say a pleasant place for such a season."

"My soldiering has not been very fortunate," said Lothair; "and I am not quite as great an admirer of the Turks as you are, general. My mind is rather on the pursuits of peace, and twenty hours ago I had a dream of settling on the shores of the Sea of Galilee."

"Whatever you do," said the general, "give up dreams."

"I think you may be right in that," said Lothair, with half a sigh.

"Action may not always be happiness," said the general; "but there is no happiness without action. If you will not fight the Egyptians, were I you, I would return home and plunge into affairs. That was a fine castle of yours I visited one morning; a man who lives in such a place must be able to find a great deal to do."

"I almost wish I were there, with you for my companion," said Lothair.

"The wheel may turn," said the general; "but I begin to think I shall not see much of Europe again. I have given it some of my best years and best blood; and, if I had assisted in establishing the Roman republic, I should not have lived in vain; but the old imposture seems to me stronger than ever. I have got ten good years in me yet; and, if I be well supported and in luck, for, after all, every thing depends on fortune, and manage to put a couple of hundred thousand men in perfect discipline, I may find some consolation for not blowing up St. Peter's, and may do something for the freedom of mankind on the banks of the Danube."

CHAPTER LXXX.

MRS. PUTNEY GILES, in full toilet, was standing before the mantel-piece of her drawing-room in Hyde Park Gardens, and watching, with some anxiety, the clock that rested on it. It was the dinner-hour, and Mr. Putney Giles, particular in such matters, had not returned. No one looked forward to his dinner, and a chat with his wife, with greater zest than Mr. Putney Giles; and he deserved the gratification which both incidents afforded him, for he fairly earned it. Full of news and bustle, brimful of importance and prosperity, sunny and successful, his daily return home—which, with many, perhaps most, men, is a process inguobiously monotonous—was in Hyde Park Gardens, even to Apollonia, who possessed many means of amusement and occupation, a source ever of interest and excitement.

To-day too, particularly, for their great client, friend, and patron, Lothair, had arrived last night, from the Continent, at Muriel House, and had directed Mr. Putney Giles to be in attendance on him on the afternoon of this day.

Muriel House was a family mansion in the Green Park. It was built of hewn stone, during the last century—a Palladian edifice, for a time much neglected, but now restored and duly prepared for the reception of its lord and master by the same combined energy and taste which had proved so satisfactory and successful at Muriel Towers.

It was a long room, the front saloon at Hyde Park Gardens, and the door was as remote as possible from the mantel-piece. It opened suddenly, but only the panting face of Mr. Putney Giles was seen, as he poured forth in hurried words: "My dear,
dreadfully late, but I can dress in five minutes. I only opened the door in passing, to tell you that I have seen our great friend; wonderful man! but I will tell you all at dinner, or after. It was not he who kept me, but the Duke of Brecon. The duke has been with me two hours. I had a good mind to bring him home to dinner, and give him a bottle of my '48. They like that sort of thing, but it will keep," and the head vanished.

The Duke of Brecon would not have dined ill, had he honored this household. It is a pleasant thing to see an opulent and prosperous man of business, sanguine and full of health, and a little overworked, at that royal meal, dinner. How he enjoys his soup! And how curious in his fish! How critical in his entrée, and how nice in his Welsh mutton! His exhausted brain rallies under the glass of dry sherry, and he realizes all his dreams with the aid of claret that has the true flavor of the violet.

"And now, my dear Apollonia," said Mr. Putney Giles, when the servants had retired, and he turned his chair and played with a new nut from the Brazils, "about our great friend. Well, I was there at two o'clock, and found him at breakfast. Indeed, he said that, had he not given me an appointment, he thought he should not have risen at all. So delighted he was to find himself again in an English bed. Well, he told me every thing that had happened. I never knew a man so unreserved, and so different from what he was when I first knew him, for he never much cared then to talk about himself. But no egotism, nothing of that sort of thing—all his mistakes, all his blunders, as he called them. He told me every thing, that I might thoroughly understand his position, and that he might judge whether the steps I had taken in reference to it were adequate."

"I suppose about his religion," said Apollonia. "What is he, after all?"

"As sound as you are. But you are right; that was the point on which he was most anxious. He wrote, you know, to me from Malta, when the account of his conversion first appeared, to take all necessary steps to contradict the announcement, and counteract its consequences. He gave me carte blanche, and was anxious to know precisely what I had done. I told him that a mere contradiction, anonymous, or from a third person, however unqualified its language, would have no effect in the face of a detailed narrative, like that in all the papers, of his walking in procession and holding a lighted taper, and all that sort of thing. What I did was this. I commenced building, by his direction, two new churches on his estate, and announced in the local journals, copied in London, that he would be present at the consecration of both. I subscribed, in his name, and largely, to all the diocesan societies, gave a thousand pounds to the Bishop of London's fund, and accepted for him the office of steward, for this year, for the Sons of the Clergy. Then, when the public feeling was ripe, relieved from all its anxieties, and beginning to get indignant at the calumnies that had been so freely circulated, the time for paragraphs had arrived, and one appeared stating that a discovery had taken place of the means by which an unfounded and preposterous account of the conversion of a distinguished young English nobleman at Rome had been invented and circulated, and would probably furnish the occasion for an action for libel. And now his return and appearance at the Chapel Royal, next Sunday, will clinch the whole business."

"And he was satisfied?"

"Most satisfied; a little anxious whether his personal friends, and particularly the Brecon family, were assured of the truth. He travelled home with the duke's son and Lord St. Aldegonde, but they came from remote parts, and their news from home was not very recent."

"And how does he look?"

"Very well; never saw him look better. He is handsomer than he was. But he is changed. I could not conceive in a year that any one could be so changed. He was young for his years; he is now old for his years. He was, in fact, a boy; he is now a man; and yet it is only a year. He said it seemed to him ten."

"He has been through a fiery furnace," said Apollonia.
"Well, he has borne it well," said Mr. Giles. "It is worth while serving such a client, so cordial, so frank, and yet so full of thought. He says he does not in the least regret all the money he has wasted. Had he remained at home, it would have gone to building a cathedral."

"And a popish one!" said Apollonia. "I cannot agree with him," she continued, "that his Italian campaign was a waste of money. It will bear fruit. We shall still see the end of the abomination of desolation."

"Very likely," said Mr. Giles; "but I trust my client will have no more to do with such questions either way."

"And did he ask after his friends?" said Apollonia.

"Very much; he asked after you. I think he went through all the guests at Muriel Towers except the poor Campians. He spoke to me about the colonel, to whom it appears he has written; but Theodora he never mentioned, except by some periphrasis, some allusion to a great sorrow, or to some dear friend whom he had lost. He seems a little embarrassed about the St. Jeromes, and said more than once that he owed his life to Miss Arundel. He dwelt a good deal upon this. He asked also a great deal about the Brentham family. They seem the people whom he most affects. When I told him of Lady Corisande's approaching union with the Duke of Brecon, I did not think he half liked it."

"But is it settled?"

"The same as—. The duke has been with me two hours to-day about his arrangements. He has proposed to the parents, who are delighted with the match, and has received every encouragement from the young lady. He looks upon it as certain."

"I wish our kind friend had not gone abroad," said Apollonia.

"Well, at any rate, he has come back," said Mr. Giles; "that is something. I am sure I more than once never expected to see him again."

"He has every virtue, and every charm," said Apollonia, "and principles that are now proved. I shall never forget his kindness at the Towers. I wish he were settled for life. But who is worthy of him? I hope he will not fall into the clutches of that popish girl. I have sometimes, from what I observed at Muriel, and other reasons, a dread misgiving."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

It was the first night that Lothair had slept in his own house, and, when he awoke in the morning, he was quite bewildered, and thought for a moment he was in the Palazzo Agostini. He had not reposed in so spacious and lofty a chamber since he was at Rome. And this brought all his recollection to his Roman life, and every thing that had happened there. "And yet, after all," he said, "had it not been for Clare Arundel, I should never have seen Muriel House. I owe to her my life." His relations with the St. Jerome family were doubtless embarrassing, even painful; and yet his tender and susceptible nature could not for a moment tolerate that he should passively submit to an estrangement from those who had conferred on him so much kindness, and whose ill-considered and injurious courses, as he now esteemed them, were perhaps, and probably, influenced and inspired by exalted, even sacred motives.

He wondered whether they were in London; and, if so, what should he do? Should he call, or should he write? He wished he could do something to show to Miss Arundel how much he appreciated her kindness, and how grateful he was. She was a fine creature, and all her errors were noble ones; enthusiasm, energy, devotion to a sublime cause. Errors, but are these errors? Are they not, on the contrary, qualities which should command admiration in any one? and in a woman—and a beautiful woman—more than admiration?

There is always something to worry you. It comes as regularly as sunrise. Here was Lothair under his own roof again, after strange and trying vicissitudes, with his
health restored, his youth little diminished, with some strange memories and many sweet ones; on the whole, once more in great prosperity, and yet his mind harped only on one vexing thought, and that was his painful and perplexed relations with the St. Jerome family.

His thoughts were a little distracted from this harassing theme by the novelty of his house, and the pleasure it gave him. He admired the double staircase and the somewhat heavy, yet richly-carved ceilings; and the look into the park, shadowy and green, with a rich summer sun, and the palace in the distance. What an agreeable contrast to his hard, noisy sojourn in a bran-new, brobdingnagian hotel, as was his coarse fate when he was launched into London life! This made him think of many comforts for which he ought to be grateful, and then he remembered Muriel Towers, and how completely and capably every thing was there prepared and appointed, and while he was thinking over all this—and kindly of the chief author of these satisfactory arrangements, and the instances in which that individual had shown, not merely professional dexterity and devotion, but some of the higher qualities that make life sweet and pleasant—Mr. Putney Giles was announced, and Lothair sprang forward and gave him his hand with a cordiality which repaid at once that perfect but large-hearted lawyer for all his exertions, and some anxieties that he had never expressed even to Apollonia.

Nothing in life is more remarkable than the unnecessary anxiety which we endure, and generally occasion ourselves. Between four and five o'clock, having concluded his long conference with Mr. Putney Giles, Lothair, as if he were traversing the principal street of a foreign town, or rather treading on tiptoe like a prince—in some enchanted castle, ventured to walk down St. James's Street, and the very first person he met was Lord St. Jerome!

Nothing could be more unaffectedly hearty than his greeting by that good man and thorough gentleman. "I saw, by the Post, you had arrived," said Lord St. Jerome, "and we were all saying at breakfast how glad we should be to see you again. And looking so well! Quite yourself! I never saw you looking better. You have been to Egypt with Lord St. Aldegonde, I think? It was the wisest thing you could do. I said to Gertrude, when you went to Sicily, 'If I were Lothair, I would go a good deal farther than Sicily.' You wanted change of scene and air, more than any man I know."

"And how are they all?" said Lothair; "my first visit will be to them."

"And they will be delighted to see you. Lady St. Jerome is a little indisposed—a cold caught at one of her bazaars. She will hold them, and they say that no one ever sells so much. But still, as I often say, 'My dear Gertrude, would it not be better if I were to give you a check for the institution; it would be the same to them, and would save you a great deal of trouble.' But she fancies her presence inspires others, and perhaps there is something in it."

"I doubt not; and Miss Arundel?"

"Clare is quite well, and I am hurrying home now to ride with her. I shall tell her that you asked after her."

"And offer her my kindest remembrances."

"What a relief!" exclaimed Lothair, when once more alone. "I thought I should have sunk into the earth when he first addressed me, and now I would not have missed this meeting for any consideration."

He had not the courage to go into White's. He was under a vague impression that the whole population of the metropolis, and especially those who reside in the sacred land, bounded on the one side by Piccadilly, and on the other by Pall Mall, were unceasingly talking of his scrapes and misadventures; but he met Lord Carisbrooke and Mr. Brancepeth.

"Ah! Lothair," said Carisbrooke, "I do not think we have seen you this season—certainly not since Easter. What have you been doing with yourself?"

"You have been in Egypt?" said Mr. Brancepeth. "The duke was mentioning at White's to-day that you had returned' with his son and Lord St. Aldegonde."
“And does it pay?” inquired Carisbrooke. “Egypt? What I have found generally in this sort of thing is, that one hardly knows what to do with one’s evenings.”

“There is something in that,” said Lothair, “and perhaps it applies to other countries besides Egypt. However, though it is true I did return with St. Aldegonde and Bertram, I have myself not been to Egypt.”

“And where did you pick them up?”

“At Jerusalem.”

“Jerusalem! What on earth could they go to Jerusalem for?” said Lord Carisbrooke.

“I am told there is no sort of sport there. They say, in the Upper Nile, there is good shooting.”

“St. Aldegonde was disappointed. I suppose our countrymen have disturbed the crocodiles and frightened away the pelicans?”

“We were going to look in at White’s—come with us.”

Lothair was greeted with general kindness; but nobody seemed aware that he had been long and unusually absent from them. Some had themselves not come up to town till after Easter, and had therefore less cause to miss him. The great majority, however, were so engrossed with themselves that they never missed anybody. The Duke of Brecon appealed to Lothair about something that had happened at the last Derby, and was under the impression, until better informed, that Lothair had been one of his party. There were some exceptions to this general unacquaintance with events which an hour before Lothair had feared fearfully engrossed society. Hugo Bohun was doubly charmed to see him, “because we were all in a fright one day that they were going to make you a cardinal, and it turned out that, at the very time they said you were about to enter the conclave, you happened to be at the second cataract. What lies these newspapers do tell!”

But the climax of relief was reached when the noble and gray-headed patron of the arts in Great Britain approached him with polished benignity, and said, “I can give you perhaps even later news than you can give me of our friends at Jerusalem. I had a letter from Madame Phoebus this morning, and she mentioned with great regret that you had just left them. Your first travels, I believe?”

“My first.”

“And wisely planned. You were right in starting out and seeing the distant parts. One may not always have the energy which such an expedition requires. You can keep Italy for a later and calmer day.”

Thus, one by one, all the cerulean demons of the morn had vanished, and Lothair had nothing to worry him. He felt a little dull as the dinner-hour approached. Bertram was to dine at home, and then go to the House of Commons; St. Aldegonde, concluding the day with the same catastrophe, had in the most immoral manner, in the interval, gone to the play to see “School,” of which he had read an account in Galigani when he was in quarantine. Lothair was so displeased with this unfeeling conduct on his part that he declined to accompany him; but Lady St. Aldegonde, who dined at Crecy House, defended her husband, and thought it very right and reasonable that one so fond of the drama as he, who had been so long deprived of gratifying his taste in that respect, should take the first opportunity of enjoying this innocent amusement. A solitary dinner at Muriel House, in one of those spacious and lofty chambers, rather appalled Lothair, and he was getting low again, remembering nothing but his sorrows, when Mr. Pinto came up to him and said: “The impromptu is always successful in life; you cannot be engaged to dinner, for everybody believes you are at Jericho. What say you to dining with me? Less than the Muses and more than the Graces, certainly, if you come. Lady Beatrice has invited herself, and she is to pick up a lady, and I was to look out for a couple of agreeable men. Hugo is coming, and you will complete the charm.”

“The spell then is complete,” said Lothair; “I suppose a late eight.”
CHAPTER LXXXII.

Lothair was breakfasting alone on the morrow, when his servant announced the arrival of Mr. Ruby, who had been ordered to be in attendance.

"Show him up," said Lothair, "and bring me the dispatch-box which is in my dressing-room."

Mr. Ruby was deeply gratified to be again in the presence of a nobleman so eminently distinguished, both for his property and his taste, as Lothair. He was profuse in his congratulations to his lordship on his return to his native land, while at the same time he was opening a bag, from which he extracted a variety of beautiful objects, none of them for sale, all executed commissions, which were destined to adorn the fortunate and the fair. "This is lovely, my lord, quite new, for the Queen of Madagascar; for the empress this, her majesty's own design, at least almost. Lady Melton's bridal necklace, and my lord's George, the last given by King James II.; broken up during the revolution, but reset by us from an old drawing with picked stones."

"Very pretty," said Lothair; "but it is not exactly this sort of thing that I want. See," and he opened the dispatch-box, and took from out of it a crucifix. It was made of some Eastern wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl; the figure carved in brass, though not without power, and at the end of each of the four terminations of the cross was a small cavity, enclosing something, and covered with glass.

"See," continued Lothair, "this is the crucifix, given with a carved shell to each pilgrim who visits the Holy Sepulchre. Within these four cavities is earth from the four holy places: Calvary, Sion, Bethlehem, and Gethsemano. Now, what I want is a crucifix, something of this dimension, but made of the most costly materials; the figure must be of pure gold; I should like the cross to be of choice emeralds, which I am told are now more precious even than brilliants, and I wish the earth of the sacred places to be removed from this crucifix, and introduced in a similar manner into the one which you are to make; and each cavity must be covered with a slit diamond. Do you understand?"

"I follow you, my lord," said Mr. Ruby, with glistening eyes. "It will be a rare jewel. Is there to be a limit as to the cost?"

"None but such as taste and propriety suggest," said Lothair. "You will of course make a drawing and an estimate, and send them to me; but I desire dispatch."

When Mr. Ruby had retired, Lothair took from the dispatch-box a sealed packet, and looked at it for some moments, and then pressed it to his lips.

In the afternoon, Lothair found himself again in the saddle, and was riding about London, as if he had never quitted it. He left his cards at Crecy House, and many other houses, and he called at the St. Jerome's late, but asked if they were at home. He had reckoned that they would not be, and his reckoning was right. It was impossible to conceal from himself that it was a relief. Mr. Putney Giles dined alone with Lothair this evening, and they talked over many things; among others the approaching marriage of Lady Corisande with the Duke of Brecon.

"Everybody marries except myself," said Lothair, rather peevishly.

"But your lordship is too young to think of that yet," said Mr. Putney Giles.

"I feel very old," said Lothair.

At this moment there arrived a note from Bertram, saying his mother was quite surprised and disappointed that Lothair had not asked to see her in the morning. She had expected him, as a matter of course, at luncheon, and begged that he would come on the morrow.

"I have had many pleasant luncheons in that house," said Lothair, "but this will be the last. When all the daughters are married, nobody eats luncheon."

"That would hardly apply to this family," said Mr. Putney Giles, who always affected to know every thing, and generally did. "They are so united, that I fancy the famous luncheons at Crecy House will always go on, and be a popular mode of their all meeting."
“I half agree with St. Aldegonde,” said Lothair, grumbling to himself, “that if one is to meet that Duke of Brecon every day at luncheon, for my part I had rather stay away.”

In the course of the evening there also arrived invitations to all the impending balls and assemblies, for Lothair; and there seemed little prospect of his again being forced to dine with his faithful solicitor as a refuge from melancholy.

On the morrow he went in his brougham to Crecy House, and he had such a palpitating of the heart when he arrived, that, for a moment, he absolutely thought he must retire. His mind was full of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, and the Sea of Galilee. He was never nervous there, never agitated, never harassed, no palpitations of the heart, no dread suspense. There was repose alike of body and soul. Why did he ever leave Palestine and Paraclete? He should have remained in Syria forever, cherishing, in a hallowed scene, a hallowed sorrow, of which even the bitterness was exalted and ennobling.

He stood for a moment in the great hall at Crecy House, and the groom of the chambers in vain solicited his attention. It was astonishing how much passed through his mind while the great clock hardly described sixty seconds. But in that space he had reviewed his life, arrived at the conclusion that all was vanity and bitterness, that he had failed in every thing, was misplaced, had no object and no hope, and that a distant and unbroken solitude in some scene, where either the majesty of Nature was overwhelming, or its moral associations were equally sublime, must be his only refuge. In the meditation of the Cosmos, or in the divine reverie of sacred lands, the burden of existence might be endured.

"Her grace is at luncheon, my lord," at length said the groom of the chambers—and Lothair was ushered into the gay, and festive, and cordial scene. The number of the self-invited guests alone saved him. His confusion was absolute, and the duchess remarked afterward that Lothair seemed to have regained all his shyness.

When Lothair had rallied and could survey the scene, he found he was sitting by his hostess; that the duke, not a luncheon man, was present, and, as it turned out afterward, for the pleasure of meeting Lothair. Bertram also was present, and several married daughters, and Lord Montalry, and Captain Mildmay, and one or two others; and next to Lady Corisande was the Duke of Brecon.

So far as Lothair was concerned, the luncheon was unsuccessful. His conversational powers deserted him. He answered in monosyllables, and never originated a remark. He was greatly relieved when they rose and returned to the gallery, in which they seemed all disposed to linger. The duke approached him, and, in his mood, he found it easier to talk to men than to women. Male conversation is of a coarser grain, and does not require so much play of thought and manner; discourse about Suez Canal, and Arab horses, and pipes, and pachas, can be carried on without any psychological effort, and, by degrees, banishes all sensibility. And yet he was rather dreamy, talked better than he listened, did not look his companion in the face, as the duke spoke, which was his custom, and his eye was wandering. Suddenly, Bertram having joined them, and speaking to his father, Lothair darted away and approached Lady Corisande, whom Lady Montalry had just quitted.

"As I may never have the opportunity again," said Lothair, "let me thank you, Lady Corisande, for some kind thoughts which you deigned to bestow on me in my absence."

His look was serious; his tone almost sad: Neither were in keeping with the scene and the apparent occasion; and Lady Corisande, not displeased, but troubled, murmured: "Since I last met you, I heard you had seen much and suffered much."

"And that makes the kind thoughts of friends more precious," said Lothair. "I have few; your brother is the chief, but even he never did me any kindness so great as when he told me that you had spoken of me with sympathy."

"Bertram’s friends are mine," said Lady Corisande; "but, otherwise, it would be
impossible for us all not to feel an interest in——, one of whom we had seen so much," she added, with some hesitation.

"Ah, Brentham!" said Lothair; "dear Brentham! Do you remember once saying to me that you hoped you should never leave Brentham?"

"Did I say so?" said Lady Corisande.

"I wish I had never left Brentham," said Lothair; "it was the happiest time of my life. I had not then a sorrow or a care."

"But everybody has sorrows and cares," said Lady Corisande; "you have, however, a great many things which ought to make you happy."

"I do not deserve to be happy," said Lothair, "for I have made so many mistakes. My only consolation is that one great error, which you most deprecated, I have escaped."

"Take a brighter and a nobler view of your life," said Lady Corisande; "feel rather you have been tried and not found wanting."

At this moment the duchess approached them, interrupted their conversation; and, soon after this, Lothair left Crecy House, still moody, but less despondent.

There was a ball at Lady Clanmornes's in the evening, and Lothair was present. He was astonished at the number of new faces he saw, the new phrases he heard, the new fashions alike in dress and manner. He could not believe it was the same world that he had quitted only a year ago. He was glad to take refuge with Hugo Bohun as with an old friend, and could not refrain from expressing to that eminent person his surprise at the novelty of all around him.

"It is you, my dear Lothair," replied Hugo, "that is surprising, not the world—that has only developed in your absence. What could have induced a man like you to be away for a whole season from the scene? Our forefathers might afford to travel—the world was then stereotyped. It will not do to be out of sight now. It is very well for St. Aldegonde to do these things, for the great object of St. Aldegonde is not to be in society, and he has never succeeded in his object. But here is the new beauty."

There was a stir and a sensation. Men made way, and even women retreated—and, leaning on the arm of Lord Carisbrooke, in an exquisite costume that happily displayed her splendid figure, and, radiant with many charms, swept by a lady of commanding mien and stature, self-possessed, and even grave, when, suddenly turning her head, her pretty face broke into enchanting dimples, as she exclaimed: "Oh, cousin Lothair!"

Yes, the beautiful giantesses of Muriel Towers had become the beauties of the season. Their success had been as sudden and immediate as it was complete and sustained.

"Well, this is stranger than all!" said Lothair to Hugo Bohun when Lady Flora had passed on.

"The only persons talked of," said Hugo. "I am proud of my previous acquaintance with them. I think Carisbrooke has serious thoughts; but there are some who prefer Lady Grizell."

"Lady Corisande was your idol last season," said Lothair.

"Oh! she is out of the running," said Hugo; "she is finished. But I have not heard yet of any day being fixed. I wonder, when he marries, whether Brecon will keep on his theatre?"

"His theatre!"

"Yes; the high mode now for a real swell is to have a theatre. Brecon has the Frolic; Kate Simmons is his manager, who calls herself Athalie de Montfort. You ought to have a theatre, Lothair; and, if there is not one to hire, you should build one. It would show that you are alive again and had the spirit of an English noble, and atone for some of your eccentricities."

"But I have no Kate Simmons who calls herself Athalie de Montfort," said Lothair. "I am not so favored, Hugo. However, I might succeed Brecon, as I hardly suppose he will maintain such an establishment when he is married."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined Hugo. "It is the thing. Several of our greatest swells have theatres and are married. In fact, a first-rate man should have every thing, and therefore he ought to have both a theatre and a wife."
"Well, I do not think your manners have improved since last year, or your morals," said Lothair. "I have half a mind to go down to Muriel, and shut myself up there."

He walked away and sauntered into the ballroom. The first forms he recognized were Lady Corisande waltzing with the Duke of Brecon, who was renowned for this accomplishment. The heart of Lothair felt bitter. He remembered his stroll to the dairy with the Duchess at Brencham, and their conversation. Had his views then been acceded to, how different would have been his lot! And it was not his fault that they had been rejected. And yet, had they been accomplished, would they have been happy? The character of Corisande, according to her mother, was not then formed, nor easily scrutable. Was it formed now? and what were its bent and genius? And his own character? It could not be denied that his mind was somewhat crude then, and his general conclusions on life and duty hardly sufficiently matured and developed to offer a basis for domestic happiness on which one might confidently depend.

And Theodora? Had he married then, he should never have known Theodora. In this bright saloon, amid the gayety of festive music, and surrounded by gliding forms of elegance and brilliancy, his heart was full of anguish when he thought of Theodora. To have known such a woman and to have lost her! Why should a man live after this? Yes; he would retire to Muriel, once hallowed by her presence, and he would raise to her memory some monumental fane, beyond the dreams even of Artemisia, and which should commemorate alike her wondrous life and wondrous mind.

A beautiful hand was extended to him, and a fair face, animated with intelligence, welcomed him without a word. It was Lady St. Jerome. Lothair bowed lowly and touched her hand with his lip.

"I was sorry to have missed you yesterday. We had gone down to Vaux for the day, but I heard of you from my lord with great pleasure. We are all of us so happy that you have entirely recovered your health."

"I owe that to you, dearest lady," said Lothair, "and to those under your roof. I can never forget your goodness to me. Had it not been for you, I should not have been here or anywhere else."

"No, no; we did our best for the moment. But I quite agree with my lord, now, that you stayed too long at Rome under the circumstances. It was a good move—that going to Sicily, and so wise of you to travel in Egypt. Men should travel."

"I have not been to Egypt," said Lothair; "I have been to the Holy Land, and am a pilgrim. I wish you would tell Miss Arundel that I shall ask her permission to present her with my crucifix, which contains the earth of the holy places. I should have told her this myself, if I had seen her yesterday. Is she here?"

"She is at Vaux; she could not tear herself away from the roses."

"But she might have brought them with her as companions," said Lothair, "as you have, I apprehend, yourself."

"I will give you this in Clare's name," said Lady St. Jerome, as she selected a beautiful flower and presented it to Lothair. "It is in return for your crucifix, which I am sure she will highly esteem. I only wish it were a rose of Jericho."

Lothair started. The name brought up strange and disturbing associations: the procession in the Jesuits' church, the lighted tapers, the consecrated children, one of whom had been supernaturally presented with the flower in question. There was an awkward silence, until Lothair, almost without intending it, expressed a hope that the cardinal was well.

"Immersed in affairs, but I hope well," replied Lady St. Jerome. "You know what has happened? But you will see him. He will speak to you of these matters himself."

"But I should like also to hear from you."

"Well, they are scarcely yet to be spoken of," said Lady St. Jerome. "I ought not perhaps even to have alluded to the subject; but I know how deeply devoted you are to religion. We are on the eve of the greatest event of this century. When I
wake in the morning, I always fancy that I have heard of it only in dreams. And many—all this room—will not believe in the possibility of its happening. They smile when the contingency is alluded to, and if I were not present they would mock. But it will happen—I am assured it will happen;” exclaimed Lady St. Jerome, speaking with earnestness, though in a hushed voice. “And no human imagination can calculate or conceive what may be its effect on the destiny of the human race.”

“You excite my utmost curiosity,” said Lothair.

“Hush! there are listeners. But we shall soon meet again. You will come and see us, and soon. Come down to Vauxe on Saturday; the cardinal will be there. And the place is so lovely now. I always say Vauxe at Whitsuntide, or a little later, is a scene for Shakespeare. You know you always liked Vauxe.”

“More than liked it,” said Lothair; “I have passed at Vauxe some of the happiest hours of my life.”

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

On the morning of the very Saturday on which Lothair was to pay his visit to Vauxe, riding in the park, he was joined by that polished and venerable nobleman who presides over the destinies of art in Great Britain. This distinguished person had taken rather a fancy to Lothair, and liked to talk to him about the Phæbus family; about the great artist himself, and all his theories and styles; but especially about the fascinating Madame Phæbus and the captivating Eu- phrosyne.

“You have not found time, I dare say,” said the nobleman, “to visit the exhibition of the Royal Academy?”

“Well, I have only been here a week,” said Lothair, “and have had so many things to think of, and so many persons to see.”

“Naturally,” said the nobleman; “but I recommend you to go. I am now about to make my fifth visit there; but it is only to a single picture, and I envy its owner.”

“Indeed!” said Lothair. “Pray tell me its subject, that I may not fail to see it.”

“It is a portrait,” said the nobleman; “only a portrait, some would say, as if the finest pictures in the world were not only portraits. The masterpieces of the English school are portraits, and some day when you have leisure and inclination, and visit Italy, you will see portraits by Titian and Raffaelle and others, which are the masterpieces of art. Well, the picture in question is a portrait by a young English painter at Rome and of an English lady. I doubt not the subject was equal to the genius of the artist, but I do not think that the modern pencil has produced any thing equal to it, both in design and color and expression. You should see it, by all means, and I have that opinion of your taste that I do not think you will be content by seeing it once. The real taste for fine art in this country is proved by the crowd that always surrounds that picture; and yet only a portrait of an English lady, a Miss Arundel.”

“A Miss Arundel?” said Lothair.

“Yes, of a Roman Catholic family; I believe a relative of the St. Jeromes. They were at Rome last year, when this portrait was executed.”

“If you will permit me,” said Lothair, “I should like to accompany you to the Academy. I am going out of town this afternoon, but not far, and could manage it.”

So they went together. It was the last exhibition of the Academy in Trafalgar Square. The portrait in question was in the large room, and hung on the eye line; so, as the throng about it was great, it was not easy immediately to inspect it. But one or two R. As who were gliding about, and who looked upon the noble patron of art as a sort of divinity, insensibly controlled the crowd, and secured for their friend and his companion the opportunity which they desired.

“It is the finest thing since the portrait of the Cenci,” said the noble patron.

The painter had represented Miss Arundel in her robe of a sister of mercy, but with uncovered head. A wallet was at her side, and she held a crucifix. Her beautiful eyes, full of mystic devotion, met those of the spec-
tator with a fascinating power that kept many spell-bound. In the background of the picture was a masterly glimpse of the papal gardens and the wondrous dome.

"That must be a great woman," said the noble patron of art.

Lothair nodded assent in silence.

The crowd about the picture seemed breathless and awe-struck. There were many women, and in some eyes there were tears.

"I shall go home," said one of the spectators; "I do not wish to see any thing else."

"That is religion," murmured her companion. "They may say what they like, but it would be well for us if we were all like her."

It was a short half-hour by the railroad to Vauxe, and the station was close to the park gates. The sun was in its last hour when Lothair arrived, but he was captivated by the beauty of the scene, which he had never witnessed in its summer splendor. The rich foliage of the great avenues, the immense oaks that stood alone, the deer glancing in the golden light, and the quaint and stately edifice itself, so finished and so fair, with its freestone pinacles and its gilded vanes glistening and sparkling in the warm and lucid sky, contrasted with the chilly hours when the cardinal and himself had first strolled together in that park, and when they tried to flatter themselves that the morning mist clinging to the skeleton trees was perhaps the burst of spring.

Lothair found himself again in his old rooms, and, as his valet unpacked his toilet, he fell into one of his reveries.

"What," he thought to himself, "if life after all be only a dream? I can scarcely realize what is going on. It seems to me I have passed through a year of visions, That I should be at Vauxe again! A roof I once thought rife with my destiny. And perhaps it may prove so. And, were it not for the memory of one event, I should be a ship without a rudder."

There were several guests in the house, and, when Lothair entered the drawing-room, he was glad to find that it was rather full. The cardinal was by the side of Lady St. Jerome when Lothair entered, and immediately after saluting his hostess it was his duty to address his late guardian. Lothair had looked forward to this meeting with apprehension. It seemed impossible that it should not to a certain degree be annoying. Nothing of the kind. It was impossible to greet him more cordially, more affectionately than did Cardinal Grandison.

"You have seen a great deal since we parted," said the cardinal. "Nothing could be wiser than your travelling. You remember that at Muriel I recommended you to go to Egypt, but I thought it better that you should see Rome first. And it answered: you made the acquaintance of its eminent men, men whose names will be soon in everybody's mouth, for before another year elapses Rome will be the cynosure of the world. Then, when the great questions come on which will decide the fate of the human race for centuries, you will feel the inestimable advantage of being master of the situation, and that you are familiar with every place and every individual. I think you were not very well at Rome; but next time you must choose your season. However, I may congratulate you on your present looks. The air of the Levant seems to have agreed with you."

Dinner was announced almost at this moment, and Lothair, who had to take out Lady Clanmorne, had no opportunity before dinner of addressing any one else except his hostess and the cardinal. The dinner-party was large, and it took some time to reconnoitre all the guests. Lothair observed Miss Arundel, who was distant from him and on the same side of the table, but neither Monsignore Capel nor Father Coleman were present.

Lady Clanmorne chatted agreeably. She was content to talk, and did not insist on conversational reciprocity. She was a pure free-trader in gossip. This rather suited Lothair. It pleased Lady Clanmorne to-day to dilate upon marriage and the married state, but especially on all her acquaintances, male and female, who were meditating the surrender of their liberty
and about to secure the happiness of their lives.

"I suppose the wedding of the season—the wedding of weddings—will be the Duke of Brecon's," she said. "But I do not hear of any day being fixed."

"Ah!" said Lothair, "I have been abroad and am very deficient in these matters. But I was travelling with the lady's brother, and he has never yet told me that his sister was going to be married."

"There is no doubt about that," said Lady Clannmorne. "The duchess said to a friend of mine the other day, who congratulated her, 'that there was no person in whom she should have more confidence as a son-in-law than the duke.'"

"Most marriages turn out unhappy," said Lothair, rather morosely.

"Oh! my dear lord, what can you mean?"

"Well, I think so," he said doggedly. "Among the lower orders, if we may judge from the newspapers, they are always killing their wives, and in our class we get rid of them in a more polished way, or they get rid of us."

"You quite astonish me with such sentiments," said Lady Clannmorne. "What would Lady St. Jerome think if she heard you, who told me the other day that she believed you to be a faultless character? And the duchess too, your friend's mamma, who thinks you so good, and that it is so fortunate for her son to have such a companion?"

"As for Lady St. Jerome, she believes in everything," said Lothair; "and it is no compliment that she believes in me. As for my friend's mamma, her ideal character, according to you, is the Duke of Brecon, and I cannot pretend to compete with him. He may please the duchess, but I cannot say the Duke of Brecon is a sort of man I admire."

"Well, he is no great favorite of mine," said Lady Clannmorne; "I think him overbearing and selfish, and I should not like at all to be his wife."

"What do you think of Lady Corisande?" said Lothair.

"I admire her more than any girl in society, and I think she will be thrown away on the Duke of Brecon. She is clever and she has strong character, and, I am told, is capable of great affections. Her manners are good, finished, and natural; and she is beloved by her young friends, which I always think a test."

"Do you think her handsome?"

"There can be no question about that: she is beautiful, and her beauty is of a high class. I admire her much more than all her sisters. She has a grander mien."

"Have you seen Miss Arundel's picture at the Academy?"

"Everybody has seen that: it has made a fury."

"I heard an eminent judge say to-day, that it was the portrait of one who must be a great woman."

"Well, Miss Arundel is a remarkable person."

"Do you admire her?"

"I have heard first-rate critics say that there was no person to be compared to Miss Arundel. And unquestionably it is a most striking countenance: that profound brow and those large deep eyes—and then her figure is so fine; but, to tell you the truth, Miss Arundel is a person I never could make out."

"I wonder she does not marry," said Lothair.

"She is very difficult," said Lady Clannmorne. "Perhaps, too, she is of your opinion about marriage."

"I have a good mind to ask her after dinner whether she is," said Lothair. "I fancy she would not marry a Protestant!"

"I am no judge of such matters," said Lady Clannmorne; "only I cannot help thinking that there would be more chance of a happy marriage when both were of the same religion."

"I wish we were all of the same religion. Do not you?"

"Well, that depends a little on what the religion might be."

"Ah!" sighed Lothair, "what between religion and marriage and some other things, it appears to me one never has a tranquil moment. I wonder what religious school
The Duke of Brecon belongs to? Very high and dry, I should think.'"

The moment the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, Lothair singled out Miss Arundel, and attached himself to her.

"I have been to see your portrait to-day," he said. She changed color.

"I think it," he continued, "the triumph of modern art, and I could not easily fix on any production of the old masters that excels it."

"It was painted at Rome," she said, in a low voice.

"So I understood. I regret that, when I was at Rome, I saw so little of its art. But my health, you know, was wretched. Indeed, if it had not been for some friends—I might say for one friend—I should not have been here or in this world. I can never express to that person my gratitude, and it increases every day. All that I have dreamed of angels was then realized."

"You think too kindly of us."

"Did Lady St. Jerome give you my message about the earth from the holy places which I had placed in a crucifix, and which I hope you will accept from me, in remembrance of the past and your Christian kindness to me? I should have left it at St. James's Square before this, but it required some little arrangement after its travels."

"I shall prize it most dearly, both on account of its consecrated character and for the donor's sake, whom I have ever wished to see the champion of our Master."

"You never had a wish, I am sure," said Lothair, "that was not sublime and pure."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

They breakfasted at Vauxe, in the long gallery. It was always a merry meal, and it was the fashion of the house that all should be present. The cardinal was seldom absent. He used to say: "I feel more on equal terms with my friends at breakfast, and rather look forward to my banquet of dry toast." Lord St. Jerome was quite proud of receiving his letters and newspapers at Vauxe earlier by far than he did at St. James's Square; and, as all were supplied with their letters and journals, there was a great demand for news, and a proportional circulation of it. Lady Clamnorne indulged this passion for gossip amusingly one morning, and read a letter from her correspondent, written with the grace of a Sévigné, but which contained details of marriages, elopements, and a murder among their intimate acquaintance, which made all the real intelligence quite insipid, and was credited for at least half an hour.

The gallery at Vauxe was of great length, and the breakfast-table was laid at one end of it. The gallery was of panelled oak, with windows of stained glass in the upper panes, and the ceiling, richly and heavily carved, was entirely gilt, but with deadened gold. Though stately, the general effect was not free from a certain character of gloom. Lit, as it was, by sconces, this was at night much softened; but, on a rich summer morn, the gravity and repose of this noble chamber were grateful to the senses.

The breakfast was over; the ladies had retired, stealing off with the Morning Post, the gentlemen gradually disappearing for the solace of their cigars. The cardinal, who was conversing with Lothair, continued their conversation while walking up and down the gallery, far from the hearing of the servants, who were disembarrassing the breakfast-table, and preparing it for luncheon. A visit to a country-house, as Pinto says, is a series of meals mitigated by the new dresses of the ladies.

"The more I reflect on your travels," said the cardinal, "the more I am satisfied with what has happened. I recognize the hand of Providence in your preliminary visit to Rome and your subsequent one to Jerusalem. In the vast events which are impending, that man is in a strong position who has made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. You remember our walk in the park here," continued the cardinal; "I felt then that we were on the eve of some mighty change, but it was then indefinite, though to me inevitable. You were destined, I was persuaded, to witness it, even, as I hoped, to take no inconsiderable share
in its fulfilment. But I hardly believed that I should have been spared for this transcendent day, and, when it is consummated, I will gratefully exclaim, "Nunc me dimittis!"

"You allude, sir, to some important matter which Lady St. Jerome a few days ago intimated to me, but it was only an intimation, and purposely very vague."

"There is no doubt," said the cardinal, speaking with solemnity, "of what I now communicate to you. The Holy Father, Pius IX., has resolved to summon an Oecumenical Council."

"An Oecumenical Council!" said Lothair.

"It is a weak phrase," resumed the cardinal, "to say it will be the greatest event of this century. I believe it will be the greatest event since the Episcopate of St. Peter; greater, in its consequences to the human race, than the fall of the Roman Empire, the pseudo-Reformation, or the Revolution of France. It is much more than three hundred years since the last Oecumenical Council, the Council of Trent, and the world still vibrates with its decisions. But the Council of Trent, compared with the impending Council of the Vatican, will be as the mediæval world of Europe compared with the vast and complete globe which man has since discovered and mastered."

"Indeed!" said Lothair.

"Why, the very assembly of the Fathers of the Church will astound the Freemasons, and the secret societies, and the atheists. That alone will be a demonstration of power on the part of the Holy Father which no conqueror from Sesostris to Napoleon has ever equalled. It was only the bishops of Europe that assembled at Trent, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, their decisions have governed man for more than three hundred years. But now the bishops of the whole world will assemble round the chair of St. Peter, and prove by their presence the catholic character of the Church. Asia will send its patriarchs and pontiffs, and America and Australia its prelates; and at home, my dear young friend, the Council of the Vatican will offer a striking contrast to the Council of Trent; Great Britain will be powerfully represented. The bishops of Ireland might have been counted on, but it is England also that will send her prelates now, and some of them will take no ordinary share in transactions that will give a new form and color to human existence."

"Is it true, sir, that the object of the council is to declare the infallibility of the pope?"

"In matters of faith and morals," said the cardinal quickly, "there is no other infallibility. That is a secret with God. All that we can know of the decision of the council on this awful head is, that its decision, inspired by the Holy Spirit, must infallibly be right. We must await that decision; and, when made known, we must embrace it, not only with obedience, but with the interior assent of mind and will. But there are other results of the council on which we may speculate; and which, I believe, it will certainly accomplish: first, it will show in a manner that cannot be mistaken that there is only one alternative for the human intellect: Rationalism or Faith; and, secondly, it will exhibit to the Christian powers the inevitable future they are now preparing for themselves."

"I am among the faithful," said Lothair.

"Then you must be a member of the Church Catholic," said the cardinal. "The basis on which God has willed that His revelation should rest in the world is the testimony of the Catholic Church, which, if considered only as a human and historical witness, affords the highest and most certain evidence for the facts and the contents of the Christian religion. If this be denied, there is no such thing as history. But the Catholic Church is not only a human and historical witness of its own origin, constitution, and authority, it is also a supernatural and divine witness, which can neither fail nor err. When it œcumenically speaks, it is not merely the voice of the fathers of the world; it declares what it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

There was a pause, and then Lothair remarked: "You said, sir, that the council would show to the civil powers of the
Christian world the inevitable future they are preparing for themselves?"

"Even so. Now mark this, my child. At the Council of Trent the Christian powers were represented, and properly so. Their seats will be empty at the Council of the Vatican. What does that mean? The separation between Church and State, talked of for a long time, now demonstrated. And what does separation between Church and State mean? That society is no longer consecrated. The civil governments of the world no longer profess to be Catholic. The faithful indeed among their subjects will be represented at the council by their pastors, but the civil powers have separated themselves from the Church; either by royal edict, or legislative enactment, or revolutionary changes, they have abolished the legal status of the Catholic Church within their territory. It is not their choice; they are urged on by an invisible power that is anti-Christian, and which is the true, natural, and implacable enemy of the one visible and universal Church. The coming anarchy is called progress, because it advances along the line of departure from the old Christian order of the world. Christendom was the offspring of the Christian family, and the foundation of the Christian family is the sacrament of matrimony, the spring of all domestic and public morals. The anti-Christian societies are opposed to the principle of home. When they have destroyed the hearth, the morality of society will perish. A settlement in the foundations may be slow in sinking, but it brings all down at last. The next step in de-Christianizing the political life of nations is to establish national education without Christianity. This is systematically aimed at wherever the revolution has its way. The period and policy of Julian are returning. Some think this bodes ill for the Church; no, it is the State that will suffer. The secret societies are hurrying the civil governments of the world, and mostly the governments who disbelieve in their existence, to the brink of a precipice, over which monarchies, and law, and civil order, will ultimately fall and perish together."

"Then all is hopeless," said Lothair.

"To human speculation," said the cardinal; "but none can fathom the mysteries of Divine interposition. This coming council many save society, and on that I would speak to you most earnestly. His holiness has resolved to invite the schismatic priesthoods to attend it, and labor to bring about the unity of Christendom. He will send an ambassador to the patriarch of the heresy of Photius, which is called the Greek Church. He will approach Lambeth. I have little hope of the latter, though there is more than one of the Anglican bishops who revere the memory and example of Land. But I by no means despair of your communion being present in some form at the council. There are true spirits at Oxford who sigh for unity. They will form, I hope, a considerable delegation; but, as not yet being prelates, they cannot take their seats formally in the council, I wish, in order to increase and assert their influence, that they should be accompanied by a band of powerful laymen, who shall represent the pious and pure mind of England—the coming guardians of the land in the dark hour that may be at hand. Considering your previous knowledge of Rome, your acquaintance with its eminent men and its language, and considering too, as I well know, that the Holy Father looks to you as one marked out by Providence to assert the truth, it would please me—and, trust me, it would be wise in you—were you to visit Rome on this sublime occasion, and perhaps put your mark on the world's history."

"It must yet be a long time before the council meets," said Lothair, after a pause.

"Not too long for preparation," replied the cardinal. "From this hour, until its assembling, the pulse of humanity will throb. Even at this hour they are speaking of the same matters as ourselves alike on the Euphrates and the St. Lawrence. The good Catesby is in Ireland, conferring with the bishops, and awakening them to the occasion. There is a party among them narrow-minded and local, the effects of their education. There ought not to be an Irish priest who was not brought up at the Propaganda. You know that admirable insti-
A CATASTROPHE.

“... We had some happy hours at Rome together—may we soon repeat them! You were very unwell there; next time you will judge of Rome in health and vigor.”

CHAPTER LXXXV.

They say there is a skeleton in every house; it may be doubted. What is more certain are the sorrow and perplexity which sometimes, without a warning and preparation, suddenly fall upon a family living in a world of happiness and ease, and meriting their felicity by every gift of fortune and disposition.

Perhaps there never was a circle that enjoyed life more, and deserved to enjoy life more, than the Brethren family. Never was a family more admired and less envied. Nobody grudged them their happy gifts and accidents, for their demeanor was so winning, and their manners so cordial and sympathetic, that every one felt as if he shared their amiable prosperity. And yet, at this moment, the duchess, whose countenance was always as serene as her soul, was walking with disturbed visage and agitated step up and down the private room of the duke; while his grace, seated, his head upon his arm, and with his eyes on the ground, was apparently in anxious thought.

Now, what had happened? It seems that these excellent parents had become acquainted, almost at the same moment, with two astounding and disturbing facts: their son wanted to marry Euphrosyne Cantacuzene, and their daughter would not marry the Duke of Brecon.

“I was so perfectly unprepared for the communication,” said the duke, looking up, “that I have no doubt I did not express myself as I ought to have done. But I do not think I said any thing wrong. I showed surprise, sorrow—no anger. I was careful not to say any thing to hurt his feelings—that is a great point in these matters—nothing disrespectful of the young lady. I invited him to speak to me again about it when I had a little got over my surprise.”

“It is really a catastrophe,” exclaimed the duchess; “and only think, I came to you for sympathy in my sorrow, which, after all, though distressing, is only a mortification!”

“I am very sorry about Brecon,” said the duke, “who is a man of honor, and would have suited us very well; but, my dear Augusta, I never took exactly the same view of this affair as you did—I was never satisfied that Corisande returned his evident, I might say avowed, admiration of her.”

“She spoke of him always with great respect,” said the duchess, “and that is much in a girl of Corisande’s disposition. I never heard her speak of any of her admirers in the same tone—certainly not of Lord Carisbrooke; I was quite prepared for her rejection of him. She never encouraged him.”

“Well,” said the duke, “I grant you it is mortifying—ininitely distressing; and Brecon is the last man I could have wished that it should occur to; but, after all, our daughter must decide for herself in such affairs. She is the person most interested in the event. I never influenced her sisters in their choice, and she also must be free. The other subject is more grave.”

“If we could only ascertain who she really is,” said the duchess.

“According to Bertram, fully our equal; but I confess I am no judge of Levantine nobility,” his grace added, with a mingled expression of pride and despair.

“That dreadful travelling abroad!” exclaimed the duchess. “I always had a foreboding of something disastrous from it. Why should he have gone abroad, who has never been to Ireland, or seen half the counties of his own country?”

“They all will go,” said the duke; “and I thought, with St. Aldegonde, he was safe from getting into any scrape of this kind.”

“I should like to speak to Granville about it,” said the duchess. “When he is serious, his judgment is good.”

“I am to see St. Aldegonde before I speak to Bertram,” said the duke. “I should not be surprised if he were here immediately.”

One of the social mysteries is, “how
things get about!" It is not the interest
of any of the persons immediately connect-
ed with the subject that society should be
aware that the Lady Corisande had declined
the proposal of the Duke of Brecon. Soci-
ety had no right even to assume that such a
proposal was either expected or contem-
plated. The Duke of Brecon admired Lady
Corisande, so did many others; and many
others were admired by the Duke of Brecon.
The duchess even hoped that, as the season
was waning, it might break up, and people
go into the country or abroad, and nothing
be observed. And yet it "got about."
The way things get about is through the
Hugo Bohuns. Nothing escapes their quick
eyes and slow hearts. Their mission is to
peer into society, like professional astrono-
mers ever on the watch to detect the slight-
est change in the phenomena. Never em-
barrassed by any passion of their own, and
their only social scheming being to maintain
their transcendent position, all their life
and energy are devoted to the discovery of
what is taking place around them; and ex-
perience, combined with natural tact, in-
vests them with almost a supernatural skill
in the detection of social secrets. And so
it happened that scarcely a week had passed
before Hugo began to sniff the air, and then
to make fine observations at balls, as to
whom certain persons danced with, or did
not dance with; and then he began the curi-
ous process of what he called putting two
and two together, and putting two and two
together proved in about a fortnight that it
was all up between Lady Corisande and the
Duke of Brecon.

Among others he imparted this information
to Lothair, and it set Lothair a thinking;
and he went to a ball that evening solely
with the purpose of making social observa-
tions like Hugo Bohun. But Lady Corisande
was not there, though the Duke of Brecon
was, apparently in high spirits, and waltzing
more than once with Lady Grizell Falkirk.
Lothair was not very fortunate in his attempts
to see Bertram. He called more than once at
Creyc House too, but in vain. The fact is,
Bertram was naturally entirely engrossed with
his own difficulties, and the duchess, harassed
and mortified, could no longer be at home in
the morning.

Her grace, however, evinced the just
appreciation of character for which women
are remarkable, in the confidence which she
reposed in the good sense of Lord St. Alde-
gonde at this crisis. St. Aldegonde was the
only one of his sons-in-law whom the duke
really considered and a little feared. When
St. Aldegonde was serious, his influence
over men was powerful. And he was seri-
ous now. St. Aldegonde, who was not con-
ventional, had made the acquaintance of
Mr. Cantacuzene immediately on his return
to England, and they had become friends.
He had dined in the Tyburnian palace of
the descendant of the Greek emperors more
than once, and had determined to make his
second son, who was only four years of age,
a Greek merchant. When the duke there-
fore consulted him on "the catastrophe," St.
Aldegonde took high ground, spoke of
Euphrosyne in the way she deserved, as one
equal to an elevated social position, and de-
serving it. "But if you ask me my opinion,
sir," he continued, "I do not think, except
for Bertram's sake, that you have any cause
to fret yourself. The family wish her to
marry her cousin, the eldest son of the
Prince of Samos. It is an alliance of the
highest, and suits them much better than
any connection with us. Besides, Cantacu-
zene will give his children large fortunes,
and they like the money to remain in the
family. A hundred or a hundred and fifty
thousand pounds—perhaps more—goes a
great way on the coasts of Asia Minor. You
might buy up half the Archipelago. The
Cantacuzenes are coming to dine with us
next week. Bertha is delighted with them.
Mr. Cantacuzene is so kind as to say he will
take Clovis into his counting-house. I wish
I could induce your grace to come and meet
him: then you could judge for yourself.
You would not be in the least shocked were
Bertram to marry the daughter of some of
our great merchants or bankers. This is a
great merchant and banker, and the descend-
ant of princes, and his daughter one of the
most beautiful and gifted of women, and
worthy to be a princess."

"There is a good deal in what St. Alde-
gonde says," said the duke afterward to his wife. "The affair takes rather a different aspect. It appears they are really people of high consideration, and great wealth too. Nobody could describe them as adventurers."

"We might gain a little time," said the duchess. "I dislike peremptory decisions. It is a pity we have not an opportunity of seeing the young lady."

"Granville says she is the most beautiful woman he ever met, except her sister."

"That is the artist's wife?" said the duchess.

"Yes," said the duke, "I believe a most distinguished man, but it rather adds to the imbroglio. Perhaps things may turn out better than they first promised. The fact is, I am more amazed than annoyed. Granville knows the father, it seems, intimately. He knows so many odd people. He wants me to meet him at dinner. What do you think about it? It is a good thing sometimes to judge for one's self. They say this Prince of Samos she is half betrothed to is attaché to the Turkish embassy at Vienna, and is to visit England."

"My nervous system is quite shaken," said the duchess. "I wish we could all go to Brentham. I mentioned it to Corisande this morning, and I was surprised to find that she wished to remain in town."

"Well, we will decide nothing, my dear, in a hurry. St. Aldegonde says that, if we decide in that sense, he will undertake to break off the whole affair. We may rely on that. We need consider the business only with reference to Bertram's happiness and feelings. That is an important issue, no doubt, but it is a limited one. The business is not of so disagreeable a nature as it seemed. It is not an affair of a rash engagement, in a discreditable quarter, from which he cannot extricate himself. There is no doubt they are thoroughly reputable people, and will sanction nothing which is not decorous and honorable. St. Aldegonde has been a comfort to me in this matter; and you will find out a great deal when you speak to him about it. Things might be worse. I wish I was as easy about the Duke of Brecon. I met him this morn-

ing and rode with him—to show there was no change in my feelings."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

The world goes on with its aching hearts and its smiling faces, and very often, when a year has revolved, the world finds out there was no sufficient cause for the sorrows or the smiles. There is too much unnecessary anxiety in the world, which is apt too hastily to calculate the consequences of any unforeseen event, quite forgetting that, acute as it is in observation, the world, where the future is concerned, is generally wrong. The duchess would have liked to have buried herself in the shades of Brentham, but Lady Corisande, who deported herself as if there were no care at Crecy House except that occasioned by her brother's rash engagement, was of opinion that "mamma would only brood over this vexation in the country," and that it would be much better not to anticipate the close of the waning season. So the duchess and her lovely daughter were seen everywhere where they ought to be seen, and appeared the pictures of serenity and satisfaction.

As for Bertram's affair itself, under the manipulation of St. Aldegonde, it began to assume a less anxious and more practicable aspect. The duke was desirous to secure his son's happiness, but wished nothing to be done rashly. If, for example, in a year's time or so, Bertram continued in the same mind, his father would never be an obstacle to his well-considered wishes. In the mean time, an opportunity might offer of making the acquaintance of the young lady and her friends.

And, in the mean time, the world went on dancing, and betting, and banqueting, and making speeches, and breaking hearts and heads, till the time arrived when social stock is taken, the results of the campaign estimated and ascertained, and the dark question asked, "Where do you think of going this year?"

"We shall certainly winter at Rome," said Lady St. Jerome to Lady Clanmorne,
LOTHAIR.

who was paying a morning visit. "I wish you could induce Lord Clanmorne to join us."

"I wish so, too," said the lady, "but that is impossible. He never will give up his hunting."

"I am sure there are more foxes in the Campagna than at Vauxe," said Lady St. Jerome.

"I suppose you have heard of what they call the double event?" said Lady Clanmorne.

"No."

"Well, it is quite true; Mr. Bohun told me last night, and he always knows everything."

"Every thing!" said Lady St. Jerome; "but what is it that he knows now?"

"Both the Ladies Falkirk are to be married, and on the same day."

"But to whom?"

"Whom should you think?"

"I will not even guess," said Lady St. Jerome.

"Clare," she said to Miss Arundel, who was engaged apart, "you always find out conundrums. Lady Clanmorne has got some news for us. Lady Flora Falkirk and her sister are going to be married, and on the same day. And to whom, think you?"

"Well, I should think that somebody has made Lord Carisbrooke a happy man," said Miss Arundel.

"Very good," said Lady Clanmorne. "I think Lady Flora will make an excellent Lady Carisbrooke. He is not quite as tall as she is, but he is a man of inches. And now for Lady Grizell."

"My powers of divination are quite exhausted," said Miss Arundel.

"Well, I will not keep you in suspense," said Lady Clanmorne. "Lady Grizell is to be Duchess of Brecon."

"Duchess of Brecon!" exclaimed both Miss Arundel and Lady St. Jerome.

"I always admired the ladies," said Miss Arundel. "We met them at a country-house last year, and I thought them pleasing in every way—artless and yet piquant; but I did not anticipate their fate being so soon sealed."

"And so brilliantly," added Lady St. Jerome.

"You met them at Muriel Towers," said Lady Clanmorne. "I heard of you there: a most distinguished party. There was an American lady there, was there not? a charming person, who sang, and acted, and did all sorts of things."

"Yes; there was. I believe, however, she was an Italian, married to an American."

"Have you seen much of your host at Muriel Towers?" said Lady Clanmorne.

"We see him frequently," said Lady St. Jerome.

"Ah! yes, I remember; I met him at Vauxe the other day. He is a great admirer of yours," Lady Clanmorne added, addressing Miss Arundel.

"Oh! we are friends, and have long been so," said Miss Arundel, and she left the room.

"Clare does not recognize admirers," said Lady St. Jerome, gravely.

"I hope the ecclesiastical fancy is not reviving," said Lady Clanmorne. "I was half in hopes that the lord of Muriel Towers might have deprived the Church of its bride."

"That could never be," said Lady St. Jerome; "though, if it could have been, a source of happiness to Lord St. Jerome and myself would not have been wanting. We greatly regard our kinsman, but, between ourselves," added Lady St. Jerome in a low voice, "it was supposed that he was attached to the American lady of whom you were speaking."

"And where is she now?"

"I have heard nothing of late. Lothair was in Italy at the same time as ourselves, and was ill there, under our roof; so we saw a great deal of him. Afterward he travelled for his health, and has now just returned from the East."

A visitor was announced, and Lady Clanmorne retired.

Nothing happens as you expect. On his voyage home Lothair had indulged in dreams of renewing his intimacy at Crecy House, around whose hearth all his sympathies were prepared to cluster. The first shock to this romance was the news he received of the impending union of Lady Corisande with the Duke of Brecon. And, what with this unexpected obstacle to intimacy, and the do-
mestic embarrassments occasioned by Ber-
tram's declaration, he had become a stran-
ger to a roof which had so filled his thoughts.
It seemed to him that he could not enter the
house either as the admirer of the daughter
or as the friend of her brother. She was
probably engaged to another, and, as Ber-
tram's friend and fellow-traveller, he fanc-
cied he was looked upon by the family as
one who had in some degree contributed to
their mortification. Much of this was im-
aginary, but Lothair was very sensitive, and
the result was that he ceased to call at Crecy
House, and for some time kept aloof from
the duchess and her daughter, when he met
them in general society. He was glad to
hear from Bertram and St. Aldegonde that
the position of the former was beginning to
soften at home, and that the sharpness of
his announcement was passing away. And,
when he had clearly ascertained that the
contemplated union of Lady Corisande with
the duke was certainly not to take place,
Lothair began to reconnoitre, and try to re-
sume his original position. But his recep-
tion was not encouraging, at least not suffi-
ciently cordial for one who by nature was
retiring and reserved. Lady Corisande was
always kind, and after some time he danced
with her again. But there were no invita-
tions to luncheon from the duchess; they
never asked him to dinner. His approaches
were received with courtesy, but he was not
courted.

The announcement of the marriage of
the Duke of Brecon did not, apparently, in
any degree, distress Lady Corisande. On
the contrary, she expressed much satisfac-
tion at her two young friends settling in life
with such success and splendor. The ambi-
tion both of Lady Flora and Lady Grizell
was that Corisande should be a bridesmaid.
This would be a rather awkward post to
occupy under the circumstances, so she em-
braced both, and said that she loved them
both so equally, that she would not give a
preference to either, and therefore, though
she certainly would attend their weddings,
she would refrain from taking part in the
ceremony.

The duchess went with Lady Corisande
one morning to Mr. Ruby's to choose a
present from her daughter to each of the
young ladies. Mr. Ruby in a back shop
poured forth his treasures of bracelets, and
rings, and lockets. The presents must be
similar in value and in beauty, and yet there
must be some difference between them; so
it was a rather long and troublesome inves-
tigation, Mr. Ruby, as usual, varying its
monotony, or mitigating its wearisomeness,
by occasionally, or suddenly, exhibiting some
splendid or startling production of his art.
The parure of an empress, the bracelets of
grand-duchesses, a wonderful fan that was
to flutter in the hands of majesty, had all in
due course appeared, as well as the black
pearls and yellow diamonds that figure and
flash on such occasions, before eyes so fa-
vored and so fair.

At last—for, like a prudent general, Mr.
Ruby had always a great reserve—opening
a case, he said, "There!" and displayed a
-crucifix of the most exquisite workmanship
and the most precious materials.

"I have no hesitation in saying the
rarest jewel which this century has pro-
duced. See the figure by Monti; a mas-
terpiece. Every emerald in the cross a
picked stone. These corners, your grace
is aware," said Mr. Ruby, condescendingly,
"contain the earth of the holy places at
Jerusalem. It has been shown to no one
but your grace."

"It is indeed most rare and beautiful," said the duchess, "and most interesting,
too, from containing the earth of the holy
places. A commission, of course?"

"From one of our most eminent pa-
trons," and then he mentioned Lothair's
name.

Lady Corisande looked agitated.
"Not for himself," said Mr. Ruby.
Lady Corisande seemed relieved.
"It is a present to a young lady—Miss
Arundel."

Lady Corisande changed color, and, turn-
ing away, walked toward a case of works
of art, which was in the centre of the shop,
and appeared to be engrossed in their ex-
amination.
CHAPTER LXXXVII.

A day or two after this adventure of the crucifix, Lothair met Bertram, who said to him, "By-the-by, if you want to see my people before they leave town, you must call at once."

"You do not mean that," replied Lothair, much surprised. "Why, the duchess told me, only three or four days ago, that they should not leave town until the end of the first week of August. They are going to the weddings."

"I do not know what my mother said to you, my dear fellow, but they go to Brent-ham the day after to-morrow, and will not return. The duchess has been for a long time wishing this, but Corisande would stay. She thought they would only bother themselves about my affairs, and there was more distraction for them in town. But now they are going, and it is for Corisande they go. She is not well, and they have suddenly resolved to depart."

"Well, I am very sorry to hear it," said Lothair; "I shall call at Crecey House. Do you think they will see me?"

"Certain."

"And what are your plans?"

"I have none," said Bertram. "I suppose I must not leave my father alone at this moment. He has behaved well; very kindly, indeed. I have nothing to complain of. But still all is vague, and I feel somehow or other I ought to be about him."

"Have you heard from our dear friends abroad?"

"Yes," said Bertram, with a sigh, "Euphrosyne writes to me; but I believe St. Aldegonde knows more about their views and plans than I do. He and Mr. Phoebus correspond much. I wish to Heaven they were here, or rather that we were with them!" he added, with another sigh. "How happy we all were at Jerusalem! How I hate London! And Brent-ham worse. I shall have to go to a lot of agricultural dinners and all sorts of things. The duke expects it, and I am bound now to do every thing to please him. What do you think of doing?"

"I neither know nor care," said Lothair, in a tone of great despondency.

"You are a little hipped."

"Not a little. I suppose it is the excitement of the last two years that has spoiled me for ordinary life. But I find the whole thing utterly intolerable, and regret now that I did not rejoin the staff of the general. I shall never have such a chance again. It was a mistake; but one is born to blunder."

Lothair called at Crecey House. The hall-porter was not sure whether the duchess was at home, and the groom of the chambers went to see. Lothair had never experienced this form. When the groom of the chambers came down again, he gave her grace's compliments, but she had a headache, and was obliged to lie down, and was sorry she could not see Lothair, who went away livid.

Crecey House was only a few hundred yards from St. James's Square, and Lothair repaired to an accustomed haunt. He was not in a humor for society, and yet he required sympathy. There were some painful associations with the St. Jerome family, and yet they had many charms. And the painful associations had been greatly removed by their easy and cordial reception of him, and the charms had been renewed and increased by subsequent intercourse. After all, they were the only people who had always been kind to him. And, if they had erred in a great particular, they had been animated by pure, and even sacred, motives. And had they erred? Were not his present feelings of something approaching to desolation a fresh proof that the spirit of man can alone be sustained by higher relations than merely human ones? So he knocked at the door, and Lady St. Jerome was at home. She had not a headache; there were no mysterious whisperings between hall-porters and groom of the chamber, to ascertain whether he was one of the initiated. Whether it was London or Vaux, the eyes of the household proved that he was ever a welcome and cherished guest.

Lady St. Jerome was alone, and rose from her writing-table to receive him. And then—for she was a lady who never lost a moment—she resumed some work, which did
not interfere with their conversation. Her talking resources were so happy and inexhaustible, that it signified little that her visitor, who was bound in that character to have something to say, was silent and moody.

"My lord," she continued, "has taken the Palazzo Agostini for a term. I think we should always pass our winters at Rome under any circumstances, but—the cardinal has spoken to you about the great event—if that comes off, of which, between ourselves, whatever the world may say, I believe there is no sort of doubt, we should not think of being absent from Rome for a day during the council."

"Why! it may last years," said Lothair. "There is no reason why it should not last as long as the Council of Trent. It has in reality much more to do."

"We do things quicker now," said Lady St. Jerome.

"That depends on what there is to do. To revive faith is more difficult than to create it."

"There will be no difficulty when the Church has assembled," said Lady St. Jerome. "This sight of the universal Fathers coming from the uttermost ends of the earth to bear witness to the truth will at once sweep away all the vain words and vainer thoughts of this unhappy century. It will be what they call a great fact, dear Lothair; and when the Holy Spirit descends upon their decrees, my firm belief is the whole world will rise as it were from a trance, and kneel before the divine tomb of St. Peter."

"Well, we shall see," said Lothair. The cardinal wishes you very much to attend the council. He wishes you to attend it as an Anglican, representing with a few others our laity. He says it would have the very best effect for religion."

"He spoke to me."

"And you agreed to go?"

"I have not refused him. If I thought I could do any good, I am not sure I would not go," said Lothair; "but, from what I have seen of the Roman court, there is little hope of reconciling our differences. Rome is stubborn. Now, look at the difficulties they make about the marriage of a Protestant and one of their own communion. It is cruel, and I think on their part unwise."

"The sacrament of marriage is of ineffable holiness," said Lady St. Jerome.

"I do not wish to deny that," said Lothair, "but I see no reason why I should not marry a Roman Catholic if I liked, without the Roman Church interfering and entirely regulating my house and home."

"I wish you would speak to Father Coleman about this," said Lady St. Jerome. "I have had much talk with Father Coleman about many things in my time," said Lothair, "but not about this. By-the-bye, have you any news of the monsignore?"

"He is in Ireland, arranging about the Ecumenical Council. They do not understand these matters there as well as we do in England, and his holiness, by the cardinal's advice, has sent the monsignore to put things right."

"All the Father Coleman's in the world cannot alter the state of affairs about mixed marriages," said Lothair; "they can explain, but they cannot alter. I want change in this matter, and Rome never changes."

"It is impossible for the Church to change," said Lady St. Jerome, "because it is Truth."

"Is Miss Arundel at home?" said Lothair.

"I believe so," said Lady St. Jerome. "I never see her now," he said, discontentedly. "She never goes to balls, and she never rides. Except occasionally under this roof, she is invisible."

"Clare does not go any longer into society," said Lady St. Jerome.

"Why?"

"Well, it is a secret, said Lady St. Jerome, with some disturbance of countenance, and speaking in a lower tone; "at least at present; and yet I can hardly on such a subject wish that there should be a secret from you—Clare is about to take the veil."

"Then I have not a friend left in the world," said Lothair, in a despairing tone.

Lady St. Jerome looked at him with an anxious glance. "Yes," she continued; "I do not wish to conceal it from you, that for a time we could have wished it otherwise—
CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

It was August, and town was thinning fast. Parliament still lingered, but only for technical purposes; the political struggle of the session having terminated at the end of July. One social event was yet to be consummated—the marriages of Lothair’s cousins. They were to be married on the same day, at the same time, and in the same place. Westminster Abbey was to be the scene, and, as it was understood that the service was to be choral, great expectations of ecclesiastical splendor and effect were much anticipated by the fair sex. They were, however, doomed to disappointment, for, although the day was fine, the attendance numerous and brilliant beyond precedent, Lord Culloden would have “no popery.” Lord Carisbrooke, who was a ritualist, murmured, and was encouraged in his resistance by Lady Clanmore and a party, but, as the Duke of Brecon was high and dry, there was a want of united action, and Lord Culloden had his way.

After the ceremony, the world repaired to the mansion of Lord Culloden in Belgrave Square, to inspect the presents and to partake of a dinner called a breakfast. Cousin Lothair wandered about the rooms, and had the satisfaction of seeing a bracelet with a rare and splendid sapphire which he had given to Lady Flora, and a circlet of diamond stars which he had placed on the brow of the Duchess of Brecon. The St. Aldegondes were the only members of the Brentham family who were present. St. Aldegonde had a taste for marriages and public executions, and Lady St. Aldegonde wandered about with Lothair, and pointed out to him Corisande’s present to his cousins.

“I never was more disappointed than by your family leaving town so early this year,” he said.

“We were quite surprised.”

“I am sorry to hear your sister is indisposed.”

“Corisande! she is perfectly well.”

“I hope the duchess’s headache is better,” said Lothair. “She could not receive me when I called to say farewell, because she had a headache.”

“I never knew mamma to have a headache,” said Lady St. Aldegonde.

“I suppose you will be going to Brentham?”

“Next week.”

“And Bertram too?”

“I fancy that we shall be all there.”

“I suppose we may consider now that the season is really over?”

“Yes; they stayed for this. I should not be surprised if every one in these rooms had disappeared by to-morrow.”

“Except myself,” said Lothair.

“Do you think of going abroad again?”

“One might as well go,” said Lothair, “as remain.”

“I wish Granville would take me to Paris. It seems so odd not to have seen Paris. All I want is to see the new streets and dine at a café.”

“Well, you have an object; that is something,” said Lothair. “I have none.”

“Men have always objects,” said Lady St. Aldegonde. “They make business when they have none, or it makes itself. They move about, and it comes.”

“I have moved about a great deal,” said Lothair, “and nothing has come to me but disappointment. I think I shall take to croquet, like that curious gentleman I remember at Brentham.”

“Ah! you remember every thing.”

“It is not easy to forget any thing at
And, it had done very much to make her happy.

"I doubt whether our reassembling will be quite as happy this year," said Lady St. Aldegonde, in a serious tone. "This engagement of Bertram is an anxious business; I never saw papa before really fret. And there are other things which are not without vexation—at least to mamma."

"I do not think I am a great favorite of your mamma," said Lothair. "She once used to be very kind to me, but she is so no longer."

"I am sure you mistake her," said Lady St. Aldegonde, but not in a tone which indicated any confidence in her remark. "Mamma is anxious about my brother, and all that."

"I believe the duchess thinks that I am in some way or other connected with this embarrassment; but I really had nothing to do with it, though I could not refuse my testimony to the charms of the young lady, and my belief she would make Bertram a happy man."

"As for that, you know, Granville saw a great deal more of her, at least at Jerusalem, than you did, and he has said to mamma a great deal more than you have done."

"Yes; but she thinks that, had it not been for me, Bertram would never have known the Phæbus family. She could not conceal that from me, and it has poisoned her mind."

"Oh! do not use such words."

"Yes; but they are true. And your sister is prejudiced against me also."

"That I am sure she is not," said Lady St. Aldegonde, quickly. "Corisande was always your friend."

"Well, they refused to see me, when we may never meet again for months, perhaps for years," said Lothair, "perhaps never."

"What shocking things you are saying, my dear lord, to-day! Here, Lord Culloden wants you to return thanks for the bridesmaids. You must put on a merry face."

The dreary day at last arrived, and very quickly, when Lothair was the only person left in town. When there is nobody you know in London, the million that go about are only voiceless phantoms. Solitude in a city is a trance. The motion of the silent beings with whom you have no speech or sympathy, only makes the dreamlike existence more intense. It is not so in the country; the voices of Nature are abundant, and, from the hum of insects to the fall of the avalanche, something is always talking to you.

Lothair shrank from the streets. He could not endure the dreary glare of St. James's and the desert sheen of Pall Mall. He could mount his horse in the park, and soon lose himself in suburban walks that he once loved. Yes; it was irresistible; and he made a visit to Belmont. The house was dismantled, and the gardens shorn of their lustre, but still it was there; very fair in the sunshine, and sanctified in his heart. He visited every room that he had frequented, and lingered in her boudoir. He did not forget the now empty pavilion, and he plucked some flowers that she once loved, and pressed them to his lips, and placed them near his heart. He felt now what it was that made him unhappy: it was the want of sympathy.

He walked through the park to the residence of Mr. Phæbus, where he had directed his groom to meet him. His heart beat as he wandered along, and his eye was dim with tears. What characters and what scenes had he not become acquainted with since his first visit to Belmont! And, even now, when they had departed, or were absent, what influence were they not exercising over his life, and the life of those most intimate with him! Had it not been for his pledge to Theodora, it was far from improbable that he would now have been a member of the Roman Catholic Church, and all his hopes at Brentham, and his intimacy with the family on which he had most reckoned in life for permanent friendship and support, seemed to be marred and blighted by the witching eyes of that mirthful Euphrosyne, whose mocking words on the moonlit terrace at Belmont first attracted his notice to her. And then, by association of ideas, he thought of the gen-
eral, and what his old commander had said at their last interview, reminding him of his fine castle, and expressing his conviction that the lord of such a domain must have much to do.

"I will try to do it," said Lothair; "and I will go down to Muriel to-morrow."

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

LOTHAIR, who was very sensible to the charms of Nature, found at first relief in the beauties of Muriel. The season was propitious to the scene. August is a rich and leafy month, and the glades and avenues and stately trees of his parks and pleasaunces seemed, at the same time, to soothe and gladden his perturbed spirit. Muriel was still new to him, and there was much to examine and explore for the first time. He found a consolation also in the frequent remembrance that these scenes had been known to those whom he loved. Often in the chamber, and often in the bower, their forms arose; sometimes their voices lingered in his ear; a frolic laugh, or whispered words of kindness and enjoyment. Such a place as Muriel should always be so peopled. But that is impossible. One cannot always have the most agreeable people in the world assembled under one’s roof. And yet the alternative should not be the loneliness he now experienced. The analytical Lothair resolved that there was no happiness without sympathy.

The most trying time were the evenings. A man likes to be alone in the morning. He writes his letters and reads the newspapers, attempts to examine his steward’s accounts, and if he wants society can gossip with his steward. But a solitary evening in the country is gloomy, however brilliant the accessories. As Mr. Phæbus was not present, Lothair violated the prime principles of a first-class Aryan education, and ventured to read a little. It is difficult to decide which is the most valuable companion to a country hermit at his nightly studies, the volume that keeps him awake or the one that sets him a-sluumbering.

At the end of a week Lothair had some good sport on his moors—and this reminded him of the excellent Campian, who had received and answered his letter. The colonel, however, held out but a faint prospect of returning at present to Europe, though, whenever he did, he promised to be the guest of Lothair. Lothair asked some of his neighbors to dinner, and he made two large parties to slaughter his grouse. They were grateful and he was popular, but "we have not an idea in common," thought Lothair, as, wearied and uninterested, he bade his last guest his last good-night. Then Lothair paid a visit to the lord-lieutenant, and stayed two nights at Agramont Castle. Here he met many county notables, and "great was the company of the preachers;" but the talk was local or ecclesiastical, and, after the high-spiced condiments of the conversation to which he was accustomed, the present discourse was insipid even to nausea. He sought some relief in the society of Lady Ida-Alice, but she blushed when she spoke to him, and tittered when he replied to her; and at last he found refuge in pretty Mrs. Ardenne, who concluded by asking him for his photograph.

On the morrow of his return to Muriel, the servant bringing in his letters, he seized one in the handwriting of Bertram, and, discarding the rest, devoured the communication of his friend, which was eventful.

It seems that the Phæbus family had returned to England, and were at Brentham, and had been there a week. The family were delighted with them, and Euphrosyne was an especial favorite. But this was not all. It seems that Mr. Cantacuzene had been down to Brentham, and stayed, which he never did anywhere, a couple of days. And the duke was particularly charmed with Mr. Cantacuzene. This gentleman, who was only in the earlier term of middle age, and looked younger than his age, was distinguished in appearance, highly polished, and singularly acute. He appeared to be the master of great wealth, for he offered to make upon Euphrosyne any settlement which the duke desired. He had no son, and did not wish his sons-in-law to be sighing for his death. He wished his daughters,
therefore, to enjoy the bulk of their inheritance in his lifetime. He told the duke that he had placed one hundred thousand pounds in the names of trustees on the marriage of Madame Phæbus, to accumulate, "and when the genius and vanity of her husband are both exhausted, though I believe they are inexhaustible," remarked Mr. Cantacuzene, "it will be a nest's-egg for them to fall back upon, and at least save them from penury." The duke had no doubt that Mr. Cantacuzene was of imperial lineage. But the latter portion of the letter was the most deeply interesting to Lothair. Bertram wrote that his mother had just observed that she thought the Phæbus family would like to meet Lothair, and begged Bertram to invite him to Brentham. The letter ended by an urgent request, that, if disengaged, he should arrive immediately.

Mr. Phæbus highly approved of Brentham. All was art, and art of a high character. He knew no residence with an aspect so thoroughly Aryan. Though it was really a family party, the house was quite full; at least, as Bertram said to Lothair on his arrival, "there is only room for you—and you are in your old quarters."

"That is exactly what I wished," said Lothair.

He had to escort the duchess to dinner. Her manner was of old days. "I thought you would like to meet your friends," she said.

"It gives me much pleasure, but much more to find myself again at Brentham."

"There seems every prospect of Bertram being happy. We are enchanted with the young lady. You know her, I believe, well? The duke is highly pleased with her father, Mr. Cantacuzene—he says one of the most sensible men he ever met, and a thorough gentleman, which he may well be, for I believe there is no doubt he is of the highest descent—emperors they say, princes even now. I wish you could have met him, but he would only stay eight-and-forty hours. I understand his affairs are vast."

"I have always heard a considerable person; quite the head of the Greek community in this country—indeed, in Europe generally."

"I see by the morning papers that Miss Arundel has taken the veil."

"I missed my papers to-day," said Lothair, a little agitated, "but I have long been aware of her intention of doing so."

"Lady St. Jerome will miss her very much. She was quite the soul of the house."

"It must be a great and painful sacrifice," said Lothair; "but, I believe, long meditated. I remember when I was at Vanxe, nearly two years ago, that I was told this was to be her fate. She was quite determined on it."

"I saw the beautiful crucifix you gave her, at Mr. Ruby's."

"It was an homage to her for her great goodness to me when I was ill at Rome—and it was difficult to find any thing that would please or suit her. I fixed on the crucifix, because it permitted me to transfer to it the earth of the holy places, which were included in the crucifix, that was given to me by the monks of the Holy Sepulchre, when I made my pilgrimage to Jerusalem."

In the evening St. Aldegonde insisted on their dancing, and he engaged himself to Madame Phæbus. Bertram and Euphrosyne seemed never separated; Lothair was successful in inducing Lady Corisande to be his partner.

"Do you remember your first ball at Crecy House?" asked Lothair. "You are not nervous now?"

"I would hardly say that," said Lady Corisande, "though I try not to show it."

"It was the first ball for both of us," said Lothair. "I have not danced so much in the interval as you have. Do you know, I was thinking, just now, I have danced oftener with you than with any one else?"

"Are you not glad about Bertram's affair ending so well?"

"Very; he will be a happy man. Everybody is happy, I think, except myself."

In the course of the evening, Lady St. Aldegonde, on the arm of Lord Montairy, stopped for a moment as she passed Lothair, and said: "Do you remember our conversation at Lord Culloden's breakfast? Who was right about mamma?"

They passed their long summer days in rambling and riding, and in wondrous new
games which they played in the hall. The striking feature, however, were the matches at battledore and shuttlecock between Madame Phœbus and Lord St. Aldegonde, in which the skill and energy displayed were supernatural, and led to betting. The evenings were always gay; sometimes they danced; more or less they always had some delicious singing. And Mr. Phœbus arranged some tableaux most successfully.

All this time, Lothair hung much about Lady Corisande; he was by her side in the riding-parties, always very near her when they walked, and sometimes he managed unconsciously to detach her from the main party, and they almost walked alone. If he could not sit by her at dinner, he joined her immediately afterward, and whether it were a dance, a tableau, or a new game, somehow or other he seemed always to be her companion.

It was about a week after the arrival of Lothair, and they were at breakfast at Brentham, in that bright room full of little round tables which Lothair always admired, looking, as it did, upon a garden of many colors.

"How I hate modern gardens!" said St. Aldegonde. "What a horrid thing this is! One might as well have a mosaic pavement there. Give me cabbage-roses, sweet-peas, and wall-flowers. That is my idea of a garden. Corisande's garden is the only sensible thing of the sort."

"One likes a mosaic pavement to look like a garden," said Euphrosyne, "but not a garden like a mosaic pavement."

"The worst of these mosaic beds," said Madame Phœbus, "is, you can never get a nosegay, and if it were not for the kitchen-garden, we should be destitute of that gayest and sweetest of creations."

"Corisande's garden is, since your first visit to Brentham," said the duchess to Lothair, "No flowers are admitted that have not perfume. It is very old-fashioned. You must get her to show it you."

It was agreed that after breakfast they should go and see Corisande's garden. And a party did go—all the Phœbus family, and Lord and Lady St. Aldegonde, and Lady Corisande, and Bertram, and Lothair.

In the pleasure-grounds of Brentham were the remains of an ancient garden of the ancient house that had long ago been pulled down. When the modern pleasure-grounds were planned and created, notwithstanding the protests of the artists in landscape, the father of the present duke would not allow this ancient garden to be entirely destroyed, and you came upon its quaint appearance in the dissimilar world in which it was placed, as you might in some festival of romantic costume upon a person habited in the courtly dress of the last century. It was formed upon a gentle southern slope, with turfén terraces walled in on three sides, the fourth consisting of arches of golden yew. The duke had given this garden to Lady Corisande, in order that she might practise her theory, that flower-gardens should be sweet and luxuriant, and not hard and scentless imitations of works of art. Here, in their season, flourished abundantly all those productions of Nature which are now banished from our once delighted senses; huge bushes of honeysuckle, and bowers of sweet-pea and sweet-brier, and jessamine clustering over the walls, and gillyflowers scented with their sweet breath the ancient bricks from which they seemed to spring. There were banks of violets which the southern breeze always stirred, and mignonette filled every vacant nook. As they entered now, it seemed a blaze of roses and carnations, though one recognized in a moment the presence of the lily, the heliotrope, and the stock. Some white peacocks were basking on the southern wall, and one of them, as their visitors entered, moved and displayed its plumage with scornful pride. The bees were busy in the air, but their homes were near, and you might watch them laboring in their glassy hives.

"Now, is not Corisande quite right?" said Lord St. Aldegonde, as he presented Madame Phœbus with a garland of woodbine, with which she said she would dress her head at dinner. All agreed with him, and Bertram and Euphrosyne adorned each other with carnations, and Mr. Phœbus placed a flower on the uncovered head of Lady St. Aldegonde, according to the principles of
high art, and they sauntered and rambled in the sweet and sunny air amid a blaze of butterflies and the ceaseless hum of bees.

Bertram and *Euphrosyne had disappeared, and the rest were lingering about the hives while Mr. Phæbus gave them a lecture on the apiary and its marvellous life. The bees understood Mr. Phæbus, at least he said so, and thus his friends had considerable advantage in this lesson in entomology. Lady Corisande and Lothair were in a distant corner of the garden, and she was explaining to him her plans; what she had done and what she meant to do.

"I wish I had a garden like this at Muriel," said Lothair.

"You could easily make one."

"If you helped me."

"I have told you all my plans," said Lady Corisande.

"Yes; but I was thinking of something else when you spoke," said Lothair.

"That was not very complimentary."

"I do not wish to be complimentary," said Lothair, "if compliments mean less than they declare. I was not thinking of your garden, but of you."

"Where can they have all gone?" said Lady Corisande, looking round. "We must find them."

"And leave this garden?" said Lothair. "And without a flower, the only one without a flower? I am afraid that is significant of my lot."

"You shall choose a rose," said Lady Corisande.

"Nay; the charm is, that it should be your choice."

But choosing the rose lost more time, and, when Corisande and Lothair reached the arches of golden yew, there were no friends in sight.

"I think I hear sounds this way," said Lothair, and he led his companion farther from home.

"I see no one," said Lady Corisande, distressed, and when they had advanced a little way.

"We are sure to find them in good time," said Lothair. "Besides, I wanted to speak to you about the garden at Muriel. I wanted to induce you to go there and help me to make it. Yes," he added, after some hesitation, "on this spot—I believe on this very spot—I asked the permission of your mother two years ago to express to you my love. She thought me a boy, and she treated me as a boy. She said I knew nothing of the world, and both our characters were unformed. I know the world now. I have committed many mistakes, doubtless many follies—have formed many opinions, and have changed many opinions; but to one I have been constant, in one I am unchanged—and that is my adoring love to you."

She turned pale, she stopped, then, gently taking his arm, she hid her face in his breast.

He soothed and sustained her agitated frame, and sealed with an embrace her speechless form. Then, with soft thoughts and softer words, clinging to him, he induced her to resume their stroll, which both of them now wished might assuredly be undisturbed. They had arrived at the limit of the pleasure-grounds, and they wandered into the park and its most sequestered parts. All this time Lothair spoke much, and gave her the history of his life since he first visited her home. Lady Corisande said little, but, when she was more composed, she told him that from the first her heart had been his, but every thing seemed to go against her hopes. Perhaps at last, to please her parents, she would have married the Duke of Brecon, had not Lothair returned; and what he had said to her that morning at Crecy House had decided her resolution, whatever might be her lot, to unite it to no one else but him. But then came the adventure of the crucifix, and she thought all was over for her, and she quitted town in despair.

"Let us rest here for a while;" said Lothair, "under the shade of this oak;" and Lady Corisande reclined against its mighty trunk, and Lothair threw himself at her feet. He had a great deal still to tell her, and, among other things, the story of the pearls, which he had wished to give to Theodora.

"She was, after all, your good genius," said Lady Corisande. "I always liked her."

"Well, now," said Lothair, "that case has never been opened. The year has elapsed,
but I would not open it, for I had always a wild wish that the person who opened it should be yourself. See, here it is.” And he gave her the case.

“We will not break the seal,” said Lady Corisande. “Let us respect it for her sake—Româ!” she said, examining it; and then they opened the case. There was the slip of paper which Theodora, at the time, had placed upon the pearls, and on which she had written some unseen words. They were read now, and ran thus:

“The Offering of Theodora to Lothair’s Bride.”

“Let me place them on you now,” said Lothair.

“I will wear them as your chains,” said Corisande.

The sun began to tell them that some hours had elapsed since they quitted Brentham House. At last, a soft hand, which Lothair retained, gave him a slight pressure, and a sweet voice whispered: “Dearest, I think we ought to return.”

And they returned almost in silence. They rather calculated that, taking advantage of the luncheon-hour, Corisande might escape to her room; but they were a little too late. Luncheon was over, and they met the duchess and a large party on the terrace.

“What has become of you, my good people?” said her grace; “bells have been ringing for you in every direction. Where can you have been?”

“I have been in Corisande’s garden,” said Lothair, “and she has given me a rose.”

THE END.
"'Now,' said I, 'is the time for you to exert all your strength.' 'I am ready,' said she."
THE LADY OF THE ICE.

A NOVEL.

BY

JAMES DE MILLE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE DODGE CLUB ABROAD," "CORD AND CREESE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. G. BUSH.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
549 & 551 BROADWAY.
1872.
ENTERED, according to act of Congress, in the year 1870, by
D. APPLETON & CO.,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.
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THE LADY OF THE ICE.

CHAPTER I.

CONSISTING MERELY OF INTRODUCTORY MATTER.

This is a story of Quebec. Quebec is a wonderful city.

I am given to understand that the ridge on which the city is built is Laurentian; and the river that flows past it is the same. On this (not the river, you know) are strata of schist, shale, old red sand-stone, trap, granite, clay, and mud. The upper stratum is ligneous, and is found to be very convenient for pavements.

It must not be supposed from this introduction that I am a geologist. I am not. I am a lieutenant in her Majesty's 129th Bobsails. We Bobsails are a gay and gallant set, and I have reason to know that we are well remembered in every place we have been quartered.

Into the vortex of Quebeccian society I threw myself with all the generous ardor of youth, and was keenly alive to those charms which the Canadian ladies possess and use so fatally. It is a singular fact, for which I will not attempt to account, that in Quebeccian society one comes in contact with ladies only. Where the male element is I never could imagine. I never saw a civilian. There are no young men in Quebec; if there are any, we officers are not aware of it. I've often been anxious to see one, but never could make it out. Now, of these Canadian ladies I cannot trust myself to speak with calmness. An allusion to them will of itself be eloquent to every brother officer. I will simply remark that, at a time when the tendencies of the Canadians generally are a subject of interest both in England and America, and when it is a matter of doubt whether they lean to annexation or British connection, their fair young daughters show an unmistakable tendency not to one, but to both, and make two apparently incompatible principles really inseparable.

You must understand that this is my roundabout way of hinting that the unmarried British officer who goes to Canada generally finds his destiny tenderly folding itself around a Canadian bride. It is the common lot. Some of these take their wives with them around the world, but many more retire from the service, buy farms, and practise love in a cottage. Thus the fair and loyal Canadiennes are responsible for the loss of many and many a gallant officer to her Majesty's service. Throughout these colonial stations there has been, and there will be, a fearful deple-
tion among the numbers of these brave but too impressionable men. I make this statement solemnly, as a mournful fact. I have nothing to say against it; and it is not for one who has had an experience like mine to hint at a remedy. But to my story:

Every one who was in Quebec during the winter of 18—, if he went into society at all, must have been struck by the appearance of a young Bobtail officer, who was a joyous and a welcome guest at every house where it was desirable to be. Tall, straight as an arrow, and singularly well-proportioned, the picturesque costume of the 129th Bobtails could add but little to the effect already produced by so martial a figure. His face was whiskerless; his eyes gray; his cheek-bones a little higher than the average; his hair auburn; his nose not Grecian—or Roman—but still impressive; his air one of quiet dignity, mingled with youthful joyance and mirthfulness. Try—

*O* reader!—to bring before you such a figure. Well—that's me.

Such was my exterior; what was my character? A few words will suffice to explain:—bold, yet cautious; brave, yet tender; constant, yet highly impressionable; tenacious of affection, yet quick to kindle into admiration at every new form of beauty; many times smitten, yet surviving the wound; vanquished, yet rescued by that very impressibility of temper—such was the man over whose singular adventures you will shortly be called to smile or to weep.

Here is my card:

**Lieut. Alexander Macerrie, 129th Bobtails.**

And now, my friend, having introduced you to myself, having shown you my photograph, having explained my character, and handed you my card, allow me to lead you to

**CHAPTER II.**

**MY QUARTERS, WHERE YOU WILL BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH OLD-JACK RANDOLPH, MY MOST INTIMATE FRIEND, AND ONE WHO DIVIDES WITH ME THE HONOR OF BEING THE HERO OF MY STORY.**

I'll never forget the time. It was a day in April.

But an April day in Canada is a very different thing from an April day in England. In England all Nature is robed in vivid green, the air is balmy; and all those beauties abound which usually set poets rhapsodizing, and young men sentimentalizing, and young girls tantalizing. Now, in Canada there is nothing of the kind. No Canadian poet, for instance, would ever affirm that in the spring a livelier iris blooms upon the burnished dove; in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. No. For that sort of thing—the thoughts of love I mean—winter is the time of day in Canada. The fact is, the Canadians haven't any spring. The months which Englishmen include under that pleasant name are here partly taken up with prolonging the winter, and partly with the formation of a new and nondescriptive season. In that period Nature, instead of being darkly, deeply, beautifully green, has rather the shade of a dingy, dirty, melancholy gray. Snow covers the ground—not by any means the glistening white robe of Winter—but a rugged substitute, damp, and discolor. It is snow, but snow far gone into decay and decrepitude—snow that seems ashamed of itself for lingering so long after wearing
but its welcome, and presenting itself in so revolting a dress—snow, in fact, which is like a man sinking into irretrievable ruin, and changing its former glorious state for that condition which is expressed by the unpleasant word "slush." There is not an object, not a circumstance, in visible Nature which does not heighten the contrast. In England there is the luxuriant foliage, the fragrant blossom, the gay flower; in Canada, black twigs—bare, scraggy, and altogether wretched—thrust their repulsive forms forth into the bleak air—there, the soft rain-shower falls; here, the fierce snow-squall, or maddening sleet!—there, the field is traversed by the cheerful plough; here, it is covered with ice-heaps or thawing snow; there, the rivers run babbling onward under the green trees; here, they groan and chafe under heaps of dingy and slowly-disintegrating ice-hummocks; there, one's only weapon against the rigor of the season is the peaceful umbrella; here, one must defend one's self with caps and coats of fur and India-rubber, with clumsy leggings, ponderous boots, steel-creepers, gauntlets of skin, iron-pointed alpenstocks, and forty or fifty other articles which the exigencies of space and time will not permit me to mention. On one of the darkest and most dismal of these April days, I was trying to kill time in my quarters, when Jack Randolph burst in upon my meditations. Jack Randolph was one of Ours—an intimate friend of mine, and of everybody else who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. Jack was in every respect a remarkable man—physically, intellectually, and morally. Present company excepted, he was certainly by all odds the finest-looking fellow in a regiment notoriously filled with handsome men; and to this rare advantage he added all the accomplishments of life, and the most genial nature in the world. It was difficult to say whether he was a greater favorite with men or with women. He was noisy, rattling, reckless, good-hearted, generous, mirthful, witty, jovial, daring, open-handed, irrepressible, enthusiastic, and confoundedly clever. He was good at everything, from tracking a moose or caribou, on through all the gamut of rinking, skating, ice-boating, and tobogganing, up to the lightest accomplishments of the drawing-room. He was one of those lucky dogs who are able to break horses or hearts with equal buoyancy of soul. And it was this twofold capacity which made him equally dear to either sex.

A lucky dog? Yea, verily, that is what he was. He was welcomed at every mess, and he had the entrée of every house in Quebec. He could drink harder than any man in the regiment, and dance down a whole regiment of drawing-room knights. He could sing better than any amateur I ever heard; and was the best judge of a meerschaum-pipe I ever saw. Lucky? Yes, he was—and especially so, and more than all else—on account of the joyousness of his soul. There was a contagious and a godlike hilarity in his broad, open brow, his frank, laughing eyes, and his mobile lips. He seemed to carry about with him a bracing moral atmosphere. The sight of him had the same effect on the dull man of ordinary life that the Himalayan air has on an Indian invalid; and yet Jack was head-over-heels in debt. Not a tradesman would trust him. Shoals of little bills were sent him every day. Duns without number plagued him from morning to night. The Quebec attorneys were sharpening their bills, and preparing, like birds of prey, to swoop down upon him. In fact, taking it altogether, Jack had full before
him the sure and certain prospect of some dismal explosion.

On this occasion, Jack—for the first time in our acquaintance—seemed to have not a vestige of his ordinary flow of spirits. He entered without a word, took up a pipe, crammed some tobacco into the bowl, flung himself into an easy-chair, and began—with fixed eyes and set lips—to pour forth enormous volumes of smoke.

My own pipe was very well under way, and I sat opposite, watching him in wonder. I studied his face, and marked there what I had never before seen upon it—a pre-occupied and troubled expression. Now, Jack's features, by long indulgence in the gayer emotions, had immovably moulded themselves into an expression of joyousness and hilarity. Unnatural was it for the merry twinkle to be extinguished in his eyes; for the corners of the mouth, which usually curled upward, to settle downward; for the general shape of feature, out-line of muscle, set of lips, to undertake to become the exponents of feelings to which they were totally unaccustomed. On this occasion, therefore, Jack's face did not appear so much mournful as dismal; and, where another face might have elicited sympathy, Jack's face had such a gross-someness, such an utter incongruity between feature and expression, that it seemed only droll.

I bore this inexplicable conduct as long as I could, but at length I could stand it no longer.

"My dear Jack," said I, "would it be too much to ask, in the mildest manner in the world, and with all possible regard for your feelings, what, in the name of the Old Boy, happens to be up just now?"

Jack took the pipe from his mouth, sent a long cloud of smoke forward in a straight line, then looked at me, then heaved a deep sigh, and then—replaced the pipe, and began smoking once more.

Under such circumstances I did not know what to do next, so I took up again the study of his face.

"Heard no bad news, I hope," I said at length, making another venture between the puffs of my pipe.

A shake of the head.
Silence again.
"Duns?"
Another shake.
Silence.
"Writs?"
Another shake.
Silence.
"Liver?"
Another shake, together with a contemp-tuous smile.

"Then I give it up," said I, and betook myself once more to my pipe.

After a time, Jack gave a long sigh, and regarded me fixedly for some minutes, with a very doleful face. Then he slowly ejacu-lated:

"Macrorie!"
"Well?"
"It's a woman!"
"A woman? Well. What's that? Why need that make any particular dif-ference to you, my boy?"

He sighed again, more dolefully than before.

"I'm in for it, old chap," said he.
"How's that?"
"It's all over."
"What do you mean?"
"Done up, sir—dead and gone!"
"I'll be hanged if I understand you."
"Hic jacet Johannes Randolph."
"You're taking to Latin by way of mak-ing yourself more intelligible, I suppose."
"Macrorie, my boy—"
"Well?"
"Macronie, old chap, I'm-going-to-be-married!!!" — page 9.
"Will you be going anywhere near Anderson’s to-day—the stone-cutter, I mean?"

"Why?"

"If you should, let me ask you to do a particular favor for me. Will you?"

"Why, of course. What is it?"

"Well—it’s only to order a tombstone for me—plain, neat—four feet by sixteen inches—with nothing on it but my name and date. The sale of my effects will bring enough to pay for it. Don’t you fellows go and put up a tablet about me. I tell you plainly, I don’t want it, and, what’s more, I won’t stand it."

"By Jove!" I cried; "my dear fellow, one would think you were raving. Are you thinking of shuffling off the mortal coil? Are you going to blow your precious brains out for a woman? Is it because some fair one is cruel that you are thinking of your latter end? Will you, wasting with despair, die because a woman’s fair?"

"No, old chap. I’m going to do something worse."

"Something worse than suicide! What’s that? A clean breast, my boy."

"A species of moral suicide."

"What’s that? Your style of expression to-day is a kind of secret cipher. I haven’t the key. Please explain."

Jack resumed his pipe, and bent down his head; then he rubbed his broad brow with his unoccupied hand; then he raised himself up, and looked at me for a few moments in solemn silence; then he said, in a low voice, speaking each word separately and with thrilling emphasis:

CHAPTER III.

"MACRORIE—OLD CHAP—I’M—GOING—TO—BE—MARRIED!!!"

At that astounding piece of intelligence, I sat dumb and stared fixedly at Jack for the space of half an hour. He regarded me with a mournful smile. At last my feelings found expression in a long, solemn, thoughtful, anxious, troubled, and perplexed whistle.

I could think of only one thing. It was a circumstance which Jack had confided to me as his bosom-friend. Although he had confided the same thing to at least a hundred other bosom-friends, and I knew it, yet, at the same time, the knowledge of this did not make the secret any the less a confidential one; and I had accordingly guarded it like my heart’s blood, and all that sort of thing, you know. Nor would I even now divulge that secret, were it not for the fact that the cause for secrecy is removed. The circumstance was this: About a year before, we had been stationed at Fredericton, in the Province of New Brunswick. Jack had met there a young lady from St. Andrews, named Miss Phillips, to whom he had devoted himself with his usual ardor. During a sentimental sleigh-ride he had confessed his love, and had engaged himself to her; and, since his arrival at Quebec, he had corresponded with her very faithfully. He considered himself as destined by Fate to become the husband of Miss Phillips at some time in the dim future, and the only marriage before him that I could think of was this. Still I could not understand why it had come upon him so suddenly, or why, if it did come, he should so collapse under the pressure of his doom.

"Well," said I, after I had rallied somewhat, "I didn’t think it was to come off so soon. Some luck has turned up, I suppose."

"Luck!" repeated Jack, with an indescribable accent.

"I assure you, though I’ve never had the pleasure of seeing Miss Phillips, yet,
from your description, I admire her quite fervently, and congratulate you from the bottom of my heart."

"Miss Phillips!" repeated Jack, with a groan.

"What's the matter, old chap?"

"It isn't—her!" faltered Jack.

"What!"

"She'll have to wear the willow."

"You haven't broken with her—have you?" I asked.

"She'll have to forgive and forget, and all that sort of thing. If it was Miss Phillips, I wouldn't be so confoundedly cut up about it."

"Why—what is it? who is it? and what do you mean?"

Jack looked at me. Then he looked down, and frowned. Then he looked at me again; and then he said, slowly, and with a powerful effort:

CHAPTER IV.

"IT'S—THE—THE WIDOW! IT'S MRS.—FINNIMORE!!!"

Had a bombshell burst—but I forbear. That comparison is, I believe, somewhat hackneyed. The reader will therefore be good enough to appropriate the point of it, and understand that the shock of this intelligence was so overpowering, that I was again rendered speechless.

"You see," said Jack, after a long and painful silence, "it all originated out of an infernal mistake. Not that I ought to be sorry for it, though. Mrs. Finimize, of course, is a deuced fine woman. I've been round there ever so long, and seen ever so much of her; and all that sort of thing, you know. Oh, yes," he added, dismally; "I ought to be glad, and, of course, I'm a deuced lucky fellow, and all that; but—"

He paused, and an expressive silence followed that "but."

"Well, how about the mistake?" I asked.

"Why, I'll tell you. It was that confounded party at Doane's. You know what a favorite of mine little Louie Berton is—the best little thing that ever breathed, the prettiest, the—full of fun, too. Well, we're awfully thick, you know; and she chaffed me all the evening about my engagement with Miss Phillips. She had heard all about it, and is crazy to find out whether it's going on yet or not. We had great fun—she chaffing and questioning, and I trying to fight her off. Well; the dancing was going on, and I'd been separated from her for some time, and was trying to find her again, and I saw some one standing in a recess of one of the windows, with a dress that was exactly like Louie's. Her back was turned to me, and the curtains half concealed her. I felt sure that it was Louie. So I sauntered up, and stood for a moment or two behind her. She was looking out of the window; one hand was on the ledge, and the other was by her side, half behind her. I don't know what got into me; but I seized her hand, and gave it a gentle squeeze.

"Well, you know, I expected that it would be snatched away at once. I felt immediately an awful horror at my indiscretion, and would have given the world not to have done it. I expected to see Louie's flashing eyes hurling indignant fire at me, and all that. But the hand didn't move from mine at all!"

Jack uttered this last sentence with the doleful accents of a deeply-injured man—such an accent as one would employ in telling of a shameful trick practised upon his innocence.

"It lay in mine," he continued. "There
it was; I had seized it; I had it; I held it; I had squeezed it; and—good Lord!—Macrorie, what was I to do? I'll tell you what I did—I squeezed it again. I thought that now it would go; but it wouldn't. Well, I tried it again. No go. Once more—and once again. On my soul, Macrorie, it still lay in mine. I cannot tell you what thoughts I had. It seemed like indelicacy. It was a bitter thing to associate indelicacy with one like little Louie; but—hang it!—there was the awful fact. Suddenly, the thought struck me that the hand was larger than Louie's. At that thought, a ghastly sensation came over me; and, just at that moment, the lady herself turned her face, blushing, arch, with a mischievous smile. To my consternation, and to my—well, yes—to my horror, I saw Mrs. Finnimore!"

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed.

"A stronger expression would fail to do justice to the occasion," said Jack, helping himself to a glass of beer. "For my part, the thrill of unspeakable horror that was imparted by that shock is still strong within me. There, my boy, you have my story. I leave the rest to your imagination."

"The rest? Why, do you mean to say that this is all?"

"All!" cried Jack, with a wild laugh. "All? My dear boy, it is only the faint beginning; but it implies all the rest."

"What did she say?" I asked, meekly.

"Say—say? What! After—well, never mind. Hang it! Don't drive me into particulars. Don't you see? Why, there I was. I had made an assault, broken through the enemy's lines, thought I was carrying everything before me, when suddenly I found myself confronted, not by an inferior force, but by an overwhelming superiority of numbers—horse, foot, and artillery, marines, and masked batteries—yes, and baggage-wagons—all assaulting me in front, in flank, and in the rear. Pooh!"

"Don't talk shop, Jack."

"Shop? Will you be kind enough to suggest some ordinary figure of speech that will give an idea of my situation? Plain language is quite useless. At least, I find it so."

"But, at any rate, what did she say?"

"Why," answered Jack, in a more dismal voice than ever, "she said, 'Ah, Jack!'—she called me Jack!—'Ah, Jack! I saw you looking for me. I knew you would come after me.'"

"Good Heavens!" I cried; "and what did you say?"

"Say? Heavens and earth, man! what could I say? Wasn't I a gentleman? Wasn't she a lady? Hadn't I forced her to commit herself? Didn't I have to assume the responsibility and pocket the consequences? Say! Oh, Macrorie! what is the use of imagination, if a man will not exercise it?"

"And so you're in for it?" said I, after a pause.

"To the depth of several miles," said Jack, relighting his pipe, which in the energy of his narrative had gone out.

"And you don't think of trying to back out?"

"I don't see my way. Then, again, you must know that I've been trying to see if it wouldn't be the wisest thing for me to make the best of my situation."

"Certainly it would, if you cannot possibly get out of it."

"But, you see, for a fellow like me it may be best not to get out of it. You see, after all, I like her very well. She's an awfully fine woman—splendid action. I've been round there ever so much; we've always been deuced thick; and she's got a
THE LADY OF THE ICE.

kind of way with her that a fellow like me can't resist. And, then, it's time for me to begin to think of settling down. I'm getting awfully old. I'll be twenty-three next August. And then, you know, I'm so deuced hard up. I've got to the end of my rope, and you are aware that the sheriff is beginning to be familiar with my name. Yes, I think for the credit of the regiment I'd better take the widow. She's got thirty thousand pounds, at least."

"And a very nice face and figure along with it," said I, encouragingly.

"That's a fact, or else I could never have mistaken her for poor little Louie, and this wouldn't have happened. But, if it had only been little Louie—well, well; I suppose it must be, and perhaps it's the best thing."

"If it had been Louie," said I, with new efforts at encouragement, "it wouldn't have been any better for you."

"No; that's a fact. You see, I was never so much bothered in my life. I don't mind an ordinary scrape; but I can't exactly see my way out of this."

"You'll have to break the news to Miss Phillips."

"And that's not the worst," said Jack, with a sigh that was like a groan.

"Not the worst? What can be worse than that?"

"My dear boy, you have not begun to see even the outside of the peculiarly complicated nature of my present situation. There are other circumstances to which all these may be playfully represented as a joke."

"Well, that is certainly a strong way of putting it."

"Couldn't draw it mild—such a situation can only be painted in strong colors. I'll tell you in general terms what it is. I can't go into particulars. You know all about my engagement to Miss Phillips. I'm awfully fond of her—give my right hand to win hers, and all that sort of thing, you know. Well, this is going to be hard on her, of course, poor thing! especially as my last letters have been more tender than common. But, old chap, that's all nothing. There's another lady in the case."

"What!" I cried, more astonished than ever.

Jack looked at me earnestly, and said, slowly and solemnly:

CHAPTER V.

"FACT, MY BOY—IT IS AS I SAY—THERE'S ANOTHER LADY IN THE CASE, AND THIS LAST IS THE WORST SCRAPE OF ALL!"

"Another lady?" I faltered.

"Another lady!" said Jack.

"Oh!" said I.

"Yes," said he.

"An engagement, too!"

"An engagement? I should think so—and a double-barreled one, too. An engagement—why, my dear fellow, an engagement's nothing at all compared with this. This is something infinitely worse than the affair with Louie, or Miss Phillips, or even the widow. It's a bad case—yes—an infernally bad case—and I don't see but that I'll have to throw up the widow after all."

"It must be a bad case, if it's infinitely worse than an engagement, as you say is. Why, man, it must be nothing less than actual marriage. Is that what you're driving at? It must be. So you're a married man, are you?"

"No, not just that, not quite—as yet—but the very next thing to it?"

"Well, Jack, I'm sorry for you, and all
that I can say is, that it is a pity that this isn't Utah. Being Canada, however, and a civilized country, I can't see for the life of me how you'll ever manage to pull through."

Jack sighed dolefully.

"To tell the truth," said he, "it's this last one that gives me my only trouble. I'd marry the widow, settle up some way with Miss Phillips, smother my shame, and pass the remainder of my life in peaceful obscurity, if it were not for her."

"You mean by her, the lady whose name you don't mention."

"Whose name I don't mention, nor intend to," said Jack, gravely. "Her case is so peculiar that it cannot be classed with the others. I never breathed a word about it to anybody, though it's been going on for six or eight months."

Jack spoke with such earnestness, that I perceived the subject to be too grave a one in his estimation to be trifled with. A frown came over his face, and he once more eased his mind by sending forth heavy clouds of smoke, as though he would thus throw off the clouds of melancholy that had gathered deep and dark over his soul.

"I'll make a clean breast of it, old chap," said he, at length, with a very heavy sigh. "It's a bad business from beginning to end."

"You see," said he, after a long pause, in which he seemed to be collecting his thoughts—"it began last year—the time I went to New York, you know. She went on at the same time. She had nobody with her but a deaf old party, and got into some row at the station about her luggage. I helped her out of it, and sat by her side all the way. At New York I kept up the acquaintance. I came back with them, that is to say, with her, and the deaf old party, you know, and by the time we reached Quebec again we understood one another.

"I couldn't help it—I'll be hanged if I could! You see, Macrorie, it wasn't an ordinary case. She was the loveliest little girl I ever saw, and I found myself awfully fond of her in no time. I soon saw that she was fond of me too. All my other affairs were a joke to this. I wanted to marry her in New York, but the thought of my debts frightened me out of that, and so I put it off. I half wish now I hadn't been so confoundedly prudent. Perhaps it is best, though. Still I don't know. Better be the wife of a poor devil, than have one's heart broken by a mean devil. Heigho!"

If E I G H O are the letters which are usually employed to represent a sigh. I use them in accordance with the customs of the literary world.

"Well," resumed Jack, "after my return I called on her, and repeated my call several times. She was all that could be desired, but her father was different. I found him rather chilly, and not at all inclined to receive me with that joyous hospitality which my various merits deserved. The young lady herself seemed sad. I found out, at last, that the old gentleman amused himself with badgering her about me; and finally she told me, with tears, that her father requested me to visit that house no more. Well, at that I was somewhat taken aback; but, nevertheless, I determined to wait till the old gentleman himself should speak. You know my peculiar coolness, old chap, that which you and the rest call my happy audacity; and you may believe that it was all needed under such circumstances as these. I went to the house twice after that. Each time my little girl was half laughing with joy, half cry
ing with fear at seeing me; and each time she urged me to keep away. She said we could write to one another. But letter-writing wasn’t in my line. So after trying in vain to obey her, I went once more in desperation to explain matters.

"Instead of seeing her, I found the old fellow himself. He was simply white, hot with rage—not at all noisy, or declamatory, or vulgar—but cool, cutting, and altogether terrific. He alluded to my gentlemanly conduct in forcing myself where I had been ordered off; and informed me that if I came again he would be under the unpleasant necessity of using a horsewhip. That, of course, made me savage. I pitched into him pretty well, and gave it to him hot and heavy, but, hang it! I’m no match for fellows of that sort; he kept so cool, you know, while I was furious—and the long and the short of it is, that I had to retire in disorder, vowing on him some mysterious vengeance or other, which I have never been able to carry out.

"The next day I got a letter from her. It was awfully sad, blotted with tears, and all that. She implored me to write her, told me she couldn’t see me, spoke about her father’s cruelty and persecution—and ever so many other things not necessary to mention. Well, I wrote back, and she answered my letter, and so we got into the way of a correspondence which we kept up at a perfectly furious rate. It came hard on me, of course, for I’m not much at a pen; my letters were short, as you may suppose, but then they were full of point, and what matters quantity so long as you have quality, you know? Her letters, however, poor little darling, were long and eloquent, and full of a kind of mixture of love, hope, and despair. At first I thought that I should grow reconciled to my situation in the course of time, but, instead of that, it grew worse every day. I tried to forget all about her, but without success. The fact is, I chafed under the restraint that was on me, and perhaps it was that which was the worst of all. I dare say now if I’d only been in some other place—in Montreal, for instance—I wouldn’t have had such a tough time of it, and might gradually have forgotten about her; but the mischief of it was, I was here—in Quebec—close by her, you may say, and yet I was forbidden the house. I had been insulted and threatened. This, of course, only made matters worse, and the end of it was, I thought of nothing else. My very efforts to get rid of the bother only made it a dozen times worse. I flung myself into ladies’ society with my usual ardor, only worse; committed myself right and left, and seemed to be a model of a gay Lothario. Little did they suspect that under a smiling face I concealed a heart of ashes—yes, old boy—ashes! as I’m a living sinner. You see, all the time, I was maddened at that miserable old scoundrel who wouldn’t let me visit his daughter—me, Jack Randolph, an officer, and a gentleman, and, what is more, a Bobtail! Why, my very uniform should have been a guarantee for my honorable conduct. Then, again, in addition to this, I hankered after her, you know, most awfully. At last I couldn’t stand it any longer, so I wrote her a letter. It was only yesterday. And now, old chap, what do you think I wrote?"

"I don’t know, I’m sure," said I, mistily;
"a declaration of love, perhaps—"

"A declaration of love? pooh!" said Jack; "as if I had ever written any thing else than that. Why, all my letters were nothing else. No, my boy—this letter was very different. In the first place, I told her that I was desperate—then I assured
her that I couldn’t live this way any longer, and I concluded with a proposal as desper- rate as my situation. And what do you think my proposal was?”

“Proposal? Why, marriage, of course; there is only one kind of proposal possible under such circumstances. But still that’s not much more than an engagement, dear boy, for an engagement means only the same thing, namely, marriage.”

“Oh, but this was far stronger—it was different, I can tell you, from any mere proposal of marriage. What do you think it was? Guess.”

“Can’t. Haven’t an idea.”

“Well,” said Jack—

CHAPTER VI.

“I IMPLOR ED HER TO RUN AWAY WITH ME, AND HAVE A PRIVATE MARRIAGE, LEAVING THE REST TO FATE. AND I SOLEMNLY ASSURED HER THAT, IF SHE REFUSED, I WOULD BLOW MY BRAINS OUT ON HER DOOR-STEP. THERE, NOW! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?”

Saying the above words, Jack leaned back, and surveyed me with the stern com- placency of despair. After staring at me for some time, and evidently taking some sort of grim comfort out of the speechless- ness to which he had reduced me by his unparalleled narrative, he continued his con- fessions:

“Last night, I made that infernal blunder with the widow—confound her!—that is, I mean of course, bless her! It’s all the same, you know. To-day you behold the miserable state to which I am reduced. To-morrow I will get a reply from her. Of course, she will consent to fly. I know very well how it will be. She will hint at some feasible mode, and some con- venient time. She will, of course, expect me to settle it all up, from her timid little hints; and I must settle it up, and not break my faith with her. And now, Macrorie, I ask you, not merely as an officer and a gentleman, but as a man, a fellow-Christian, and a sympathizing friend, what under Heaven am I to do?”

He stopped, leaned back in his chair, lighted once more his extinguished pipe, and I could see through the dense volumes of smoke which he blew forth, his eyes fixed earnestly upon me, gleaming like two stars from behind gloomy storm-clouds.

I sat in silence, and thought long and painfully over the situation. I could come to no conclusion, but I had to say some- thing, and I said it.

“Put it off,” said I at last, in a general state of daze.

“Put what off?”

“What? Why, the widow—no, the— the elopement, of course. Yes,” I continued, firmly, “put off the elopement.”

“Put off the elopement!” ejaculated Jack. “What! after proposing it so des- perately—after threatening to blow my brains out in front of her door?”

“That certainly is a consideration,” said I, thoughtfully; “but can’t you have—well, brain-fever—yes, that’s it, and can’t you get some friend to send word to her?”

“That’s all very well; but, you see, I’d have to keep my room. If I went out, she’d hear of it. She’s got a wonderful way of hearing about my movements. She’ll find out about the widow before the week’s over. Oh, no! that’s not to be done.”

“Well, then,” said I, desperately, “let her find it out. The blow would then fall a little more gently.”

“You seem to me,” said Jack, rather huffily, “to propose that I should quietly
proceed to break her heart. No! Hang it, man, if it comes to that I'll do it openly, and make a clean breast of it, without shamming or keeping her in suspense."

"Well, then," I responded, "why not break off with the widow?"

"Break off with the widow!" cried Jack, with the wondering accent of a man who has heard some impossible proposal.

"Certainly; why not?"

"Will you be kind enough to inform me what thing short of death could ever deliver me out of her hands?" asked Jack, mildly.

"Elope, as you proposed."

"That's the very thing I thought of; but the trouble is, in that case she would devote the rest of her life to vengeance. 'Hell hath no fury like a woman wronged,' you know. She'd move heaven and earth, and never end, till I was drummed out of the regiment. No, my boy. To do that would be to walk with open eyes to disgrace, and shame, and infamy, with a whole community, a whole regiment, and the Horse-Guards at the back of them, all banded together to crush me. Such a fate as this would hardly be the proper thing to give to a wife that a fellow loves."

"Can't you manage to make the widow disgusted with you?"

"No, I can't," said Jack, peevishly.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, make it appear as though you only wanted to marry her for her money."

"Oh, hang it, man! how could I do that? I can't play a part, under any circumstances, and that particular part would be so infernally mean, that it would be impossible. I'm such an ass that, if she were even to hint at that, I'd resent it furiously."

"Can't you make her afraid about your numerous gallantries?"

"Afraid? why she glories in them. So many feathers in her cap, and all that, you know."

"Can't you frighten her about your debts and general extravagance—hint that you're a gambler, and so on?"

"And then she'd inform me, very affectionately, that she intends to be my guardian angel, and save me from evil for all the rest of my life."

"Can't you tell her all about your solemn engagement to Miss Phillips?"

"My engagement to Miss Phillips? Why, man alive, she knows that as well as you do."

"Knows it! How did she find it out?"

"How? Why I told her myself."

"The deuce you did!"

Jack was silent.

"Well, then," said I, after some further thought, "why not tell her every thing?"

"Tell her every thing?"

"Yes—exactly what you've been telling me. Make a clean breast of it."

Jack looked at me for some time with a curious expression.

"My dear boy," said he, at length, "do you mean to say that you are really in earnest in making that proposition?"

"Most solemnly in earnest," said I.

"Well," said Jack, "it shows how mistaken I was in leaving any thing to your imagination. You do not seem to understand," he continued, dolefully, "or you will not understand that, when a fellow has committed himself to a lady as I did, and squeezed her hand with such peculiar ardor, in his efforts to save himself and do what's right, he often overdoes it. You don't seem to suspect that I might have overdone it with the widow. Now, unfortunately, that is the very thing that I did. I did happen to overdo it most confoundedly. And so the melancholy fact remains
that, if I were to repeat to her, verbatim, all that I've been telling you, she would find an extraordinary discrepancy between such statements and those abominably tender confessions in which I indulged on that other occasion. Nothing would ever convince her that I was not sincere at that time; and how can I go to her now and confess that I am a humbug and an idiot? I don't see it. Come, now, old fellow, what do you think of that? Don't you call it rather a tough situation? Do you think a man can see his way out of it? Own up, now. Don't you think it's about the worst scrape you ever heard of? Come, now, no humbug."

The fellow seemed actually to begin to feel a diurnal kind of pride in the very hopelessness of his situation, and looked at me with a gloomy enjoyment of my discomfort.

For my part, I said nothing, and for the best of reasons: I had nothing to say. So I took refuge in shaking my head.

"You see," Jack persisted, "there's no help for it. Nobody can do any thing. There's only one thing, and that you haven't suggested."

"What's that?" I asked, feebly.

Jack put the tip of his forefinger to his forehead, and snapped his thumb against his third.

"I haven't much brains to speak of," said he, "but if I did happen to blow out what little I may have, it would be the easiest settlement of the difficulty. It would be cutting the knot, instead of attempting the impossible task of untying it. Nobody would blame me. Everybody would mourn for me, and, above all, four tender female hearts would feel a pang of sorrow for my untimely fate. By all four I should be not cursed, but canonized. Only one class would suffer, and those would be wel-

come to their agonies. I allude, of course, to my friends the Duns."

To this eccentric proposal, I made no reply whatever.

"Well," said Jack, thoughtfully, "it isn't a bad idea. Not a bad idea," he repeated, rising from his chair and putting down his pipe, which had again gone out owing to his persistent loquacity. "I'll think it over," he continued, seriously.

"You bear in mind my little directions about the head-stone, Macrorie, four feet by eighteen inches, old fellow, very plain, and, mark me, only the name and date. Not a word about the virtues of the deceased, etc. I can stand a great deal, but that I will not stand. And now, old chap, I must be off; you can't do me any good, I see."

"At any rate, you'll wait till to-morrow," said I, carelessly.

"Oh, there's no hurry," said he. "Of course, I must wait till then. I'll let you know if any thing new turns up."

And saying this, he took his departure.

CHAPTER VII.


On the following day I found myself compelled to go on some routine duty cross the river to Point Lory. The weather was the most abominable of that abominable season. It was winter, and yet not Winter's self. The old gentleman had lost all that bright and hilarious nature; all that sparkling and exciting stimulus which he owns and holds here so joyously in January, February, and even March. He was de-
crepit, yet spiteful; a hoary, old, tottering, palsied villain, hurling curses at all who ventured into his evil presence. One look outside showed me the full nature of all that was before me, and revealed the old tyrant in the full power of his malignancy. The air was raw and chill. There blew a fierce, blighting wind, which brought with it showers of stinging sleet. The wooden pavements were overspread with a thin layer of ice, so glassy that walking could only be attempted at extreme hazard; the houses were incrusted with the same cheerful coating; and, of all the beastly weather that I had ever seen, there had never been any equal to this. However, there was no escape from it; and so, wrapping myself up as well as I could, I took a stout stick with a sharp iron ferrule, and plunged forth into the storm.

On reaching the river, the view was any thing but satisfactory. The wind here was tremendous, and the sleet blew down in long, horizontal lines, every separate particle giving its separate sting, while the accumulated stings amounted to perfect torment. I paused for a while to get a little shelter, and take breath before venturing across.

There were other reasons for pausing. The season was well advanced, and the ice was not considered particularly safe. Many things conspired to give indications of a break-up. The ice on the surface was soft, honey-combed, and crumbling. Near the shore was a channel of open water. Further out, where the current ran strongest, the ice was heaped up in hillocks and mounds, while in different directions appeared crevices of greater or less width. Looking over that broad surface as well as I could through the driving storm, where not long before I had seen crowds passing and repassing, not a soul was now visible.

This might have been owing to the insecurity of the ice; but it might also have been owing to the severity of the weather. Black enough, at any rate, the scene appeared; and I looked forth upon it from my temporary shelter with the certainty that this river before me was a particularly hard road to travel.

"Ye'll no be gangin' ower the day, sewerly?" said a voice near me.

I turned and saw a brawny figure in a reefing-jacket and "soul'-wester." He might have been a sailor, or a scowman, or a hibernating raftsman.

"Why?" said I.

He said nothing, but shook his head with solemn emphasis.

I looked for a few moments longer, and hesitated. Yet there was no remedy for it, bad as it looked. After being ordered forward, I did not like to turn back with an excuse about the weather. Besides, the ice thus far had lasted well. Only the day before, sleds had crossed. There was no reason why I should not cross now. Why should I in particular be doomed to a catastrophe more than any other man? And, finally, was not McGoggin there? Was he not always ready with his warmest welcome? On a stormy day, did he not always keep his water up to the boiling-point, and did not the very best whiskey in Quebec diffuse about his chamber its aromatic odor?

I moved forward. The die was cast.

The channel near the shore was from six to twelve feet in width, filled with floating fragments. Over this I scrambled in safety. As I advanced, I could see that in one day a great change had taken place. The surface-ice was soft and disintegrated, crushing readily under the feet. All around me extended wide pools of water. From beneath these arose occasional groaning
sounds—dull, heavy crunches, which seemed to indicate a speedy break-up. The progress of the season, with its thaws and rains, had been gradually weakening the ice; along the shore its hold had in some places at least been relaxed; and the gale of wind that was now blowing was precisely of that description which most frequently sweeps away resistlessly the icy fetters of the river, and sets all the imprisoned waters free. At every step new signs of this approaching break-up became visible. From time to time I encountered gaps in the ice, of a foot or two in width, which did not of themselves amount to much, but which nevertheless served to show plainly the state of things.

My progress was excessively difficult. The walking was laborious on account of the ice itself and the pools through which I had to wade. Then there were frequent gaps, which sometimes could only be traversed by a long detour. Above all, there was the furious sleet, which drove down the river, borne on by the tempest, with a fury and unrelaxing pertinacity that I never saw equalled. However, I managed to toil onward, and at length reached the centre of the river. Here I found a new and more serious obstacle. At this point the ice had divided; and in the channel thus formed there was a vast accumulation of ice-cakes, heaped up one above the other in a long ridge, which extended as far as the eye could reach. There were great gaps in it, however, and to cross it needed so much caution, and so much effort, that I paused for a while, and, setting my back to the wind, looked around to examine the situation.

Wild enough that scene appeared. On one side was my destination, but dimly visible through the storm; on the other rose the dark cliff of Cape Diamond, frowning gloomily over the river, crowned with the citadel, where the flag of Old England was streaming straight out at the impulse of the blast, with a stiffness that made it seem as though it had been frozen in the air rigid in that situation. Up the river all was black and gloomy; and the storm which burst from that quarter obscured the view; down the river the prospect was as gloomy, but one thing was plainly visible—a wide, black surface, terminating the gray of the ice, and showing that there at least the break-up had begun, and the river had resumed its sway.

A brief survey showed me all this, and for a moment created a strong desire to go back. Another moment, however, showed that to go forward was quite as wise and as safe. I did not care to traverse again what I had gone over, and the natural reluctance to turn back from the half-way house, joined to the hope of better things for the rest of the way, decided me to go forward.

After some examination, I found a place on which to cross the central channel. It was a point where the heaps of ice seemed at once more easy to the foot, and more secure. At extreme risk, and by violent efforts, I succeeded in crossing, and, on reaching the other side, I found the ice more promising. Then, hoping that the chief danger had been successfully encountered, I gathered up my energies, and stepped out briskly toward the opposite shore.

It was not without the greatest difficulty and the utmost discomfort that I had come thus far. My clothes were coated with frozen sleet; my hair was a mass of ice; and my boots were filled with water. Wretched as all this was, there was no remedy for it, so I footed it as best I could, trying to console myself by thinking over the peaceful pleasures which were awaiting
me at the end of my journey in the chambers of the hospitable McGoggin.

Suddenly, as I walked along, peering with half-closed eyes through the stormy sleet before me, I saw at some distance a dark object approaching. After a time, the object drew nearer, and resolved itself into a sleigh. It came onward toward the centre of the river, which it reached at about a hundred yards below the point where I had crossed. There were two occupants in the sleigh, one crouching low and muffled in wraps; the other the driver, who looked like one of the common habitans. Knowing the nature of the river there, and wondering what might bring a sleigh out at such a time, I stopped, and watched them with a vague idea of shouting to them to go back. Their progress thus far from the opposite shore, so far at least as I could judge, made me conclude that the ice on this side must be comparatively good, while my own journey had proved that on the Quebec side it was utterly impossible for a horse to go.

As they reached the channel where the crumbled ice-blocks lay floating, heaped up as I have described, the sleigh stopped, and the driver looked anxiously around. At that very instant there came one of those low, dull, grinding sounds I have already mentioned, but very much louder than any that I had hitherto heard. Deep, angry thuds followed, and crunching sounds, while beneath all there arose a solemn murmur like the "voice of many waters." I felt the ice heave under my feet, and sway in long, slow undulations, and one thought, quick as lightning, flashed horribly into my mind. Instinctively I leaped forward toward my destination, while the ice rolled and heaved beneath me, and the dread sounds grew louder at every step.

Scarcely had I gone a dozen paces when a piercing scream arrested me. I stopped and looked back. For a few moments only had I turned away, yet in that short interval a fearful change had taken place. The long ridge of ice which had been heaped up in the mid-channel had increased to thrice its former height, and the crunching and grinding of the vast masses arose above the roaring of the storm. Far up the river there came a deeper and fuller sound of the same kind, which, brought down by the wind, burst with increasing terrors upon the ear. The ridge of ice was in constant motion, being pressed and heaped up in ever-increasing masses, and, as it heaped itself up, toppling over and falling with a noise like thunder. There could be but one cause for all this, and the fear which had already flashed through my brain was now confirmed to my sight. The ice on which I stood was breaking up!

As all this burst upon my sight, I saw the sleigh. The horse had stopped in front of the ridge of ice in the mid-channel, and was rearing and plunging violently. The driver was lashing furiously and trying to turn the animal, which, frenzyed by terror, and maddened by the stinging sleet, refused to obey, and would only rear and kick. Suddenly the ice under the sleigh sank down, and a flood of water rolled over it, followed by an avalanche of ice-blocks which had tumbled from the ridge. With a wild snort of terror, the horse turned, whirling round the sleigh, and with the speed of the wind dashed back toward the shore. As the sleigh came near, I saw the driver upright and trying to regain his command of the horse, and at that instant the other passenger started erect. The cloak fell back. I saw a face pale, overhung with dishevelled hair, and filled with an anguish of fear. But the pallor and the fear could
not conceal the exquisite loveliness of that woman-face, which was thus so suddenly revealed in the midst of the storm and in the presence of death; and which now, beautiful beyond all that I had ever dreamed of, arose before my astonished eyes. It was from her that the cry had come but a few moments before. As she passed she saw me, and another cry escaped her. In another moment she was far ahead.

And now I forgot all about the dangers around me, and the lessening chances of an interview with McGoggin. I hurried on, less to secure my own safety than to assist the lady. And thus as I rushed onward I became aware of a new danger which arose darkly between me and the shore. It was a long, black channel, gradually opening itself up, and showing in its gloomy surface a dividing line between me and life. To go back seemed now impossible—to go forward was to meet these black waters.

Toward this gulf the frightened horse ran at headlong speed. Soon he reached the margin of the ice. The water was before him and headed him off. Terrified again at this, he swerved aside, and bounded up the river. The driver pulled frantically at the reins. The lady, who had fallen back again in her seat, was motionless. On went the horse, and, at every successive leap in his mad career, the sleigh swung wildly first to one side and then to the other. At last there occurred a curve in the line of ice, and reaching this the horse turned once more to avoid it. In doing so, the sleigh was swung toward the water. The shafts broke. The harness was torn asunder. The off-runner of the sleigh slid from the ice—it tilted over; the driver jerked at the reins and made a wild leap. In vain. His feet were entangled in the fur robes which dragged him back. A shriek, louder, wilder, and far more fearful than before, rang out through the storm; and the next instant down went the sleigh with its occupants into the water, the driver falling out, while the horse, though free from the sleigh, was yet jerked aside by the reins, and before he could recover himself fell with the rest into the icy stream.

All this seemed to have taken place in an instant. I hurried on, with all my thoughts on this lady who was thus doomed to so sudden and so terrible a fate. I could see the sleigh floating for a time, and the head of the horse, that was swimming. I sprang to a place which seemed to give a chance of assisting them, and looked eagerly to see what had become of the lady. The sleigh drifted steadily along. It was one of that box-shaped kind called pungs, which are sometimes made so tight that they can resist the action of water, and float either in crossing a swollen stream, or in case of breaking through the ice. Such boat-like sleighs are not uncommon; and this one was quite buoyant. I could see nothing of the driver. He had probably sunk at once, or had been drawn under the ice. The horse, entangled in the shafts, had regained the ice, and had raised one foreleg to its surface, with which he was making furious struggles to emerge from the water, while snorts of terror escaped him. But where was the lady? I hurried farther up, and, as I approached, I could see something crouched in a heap at the bottom of the floating sleigh. Was it she—or was it only the heap of buffalo-robes? I could not tell.

The sleigh drifted on, and soon I came near enough to see that the bundle had life. I came close to where it floated. It was not more than six yards off, and was drifting steadily nearer. I walked on by the edge of the ice, and shouted. There was no answer. At length I saw a white hand
clutching the side of the sleigh. A thrill
of exultant hope passed through me. I
shouted again and again, but my voice was
lost in the roar of the crashing ice and the
howling gale. Yet, though my voice had
not been heard, I was free from suspense,
for I saw that the lady thus far was safe,
and I could wait a little longer for the
chance of affording her assistance. I
walked on, then, in silence, watching the
sleigh which continued to float. We trav-
elled thus a long distance—I, and the wom-
an who had thus been so strangely wrecked
in so strange a bark. Looking back, I
could no longer see any signs of the horse.
All this time the sleigh was gradually drift-
ed nearer the edge of the ice on which I
walked, until at last it came so near that
I reached out my stick, and, catching it
with the crooked handle, drew it toward
me. The shock, as the sleigh struck
against the ice, roused its occupant. She
started up, stood upright, stared for a mo-
ment at me, and then at the scene around.
Then she sprang out, and, clasping her
hands, fell upon her knees, and seemed to
mutter words of prayer. Then she rose to
her feet, and looked around with a face of
horror. There was such an anguish of fear
in her face, that I tried to comfort her.
But my efforts were useless.

"Oh! there is no hope! The river
is breaking up!" she moaned. "They
told me it would. How mad I was to try
to cross!"

Finding that I could do nothing to quell
her fears, I began to think what was best to
be done. First of all, I determined to se-
cure the sleigh. It might be the means of
saving us, or, if not, it would at any rate do
for a place of rest. It was better than the
wet ice for the lady. So I proceeded to pull
it on the ice. The lady tried to help me,
and, after a desperate effort, the heavy
pung was dragged from the water upon the
frozen surface. I then made her sit in
it, and wrapped the furs around her as well
as I could.

She submitted without a word. Her
white face was turned toward mine; and
once or twice she threw upon me, from her
dark, expressive eyes, a look of speechless
gratitude. I tried to promise safety, and
courage her as well as I could, and she
seemed to make an effort to regain her self-
control.

In spite of my efforts at consolation, her
despair affected me. I looked all around
to see what the chances of escape might
be. As I took that survey, I perceived
that those chances were indeed small. The
first thing that struck me was, that Cape
Diamond was far behind the point where I
at present stood. While the sleigh had
drifted, and I had walked beside it, our
progress had been down the river; and
since then the ice, which itself had all this
time been drifting, had borne us on without
ceasing. We were still drifting at the very
moment that I looked around. We had also
moved farther away from the shore which I
wished to reach, and nearer to the Quebec
side. When the sleigh had first gone over,
there had not been more than twenty yards
between the ice and the shore; but now
that shore was full two hundred yards
away. All this time the fury of the wind,
and the torment of the blinding, stinging
sleet, had not in the least abated; the grind-
ing and roaring of the ice had increased;
the long ridge had heaped itself up to a
greater height, and opposite us it towered
up in formidable masses.

I thought at one time of intrusting my-
self with my companion to the sleigh, in
the hope of using it as a boat to gain the
shore. But I could not believe that it
would float with both of us, and, if it
would, there were no means of moving or guiding it. Better to remain on the ice than to attempt that. Such a refuge would only do as a last resort. After giving up this idea, I watched to see if there was any chance of drifting back to the shore, but soon saw that there was none. Every moment drew us farther off. Then I thought of a score of desperate undertakings, but all of them were given up almost as soon as they suggested themselves.

All this time the lady had sat in silence—deathly pale, looking around with that same anguish of fear which I had noticed from the first, like one who awaits an inevitable doom. The storm beat about her pitilessly; occasional shudders passed through her; and the dread scene around affected me far less than those eyes of agony, that pallid face, and those tremulous white lips that seemed to murmur prayers. She saw, as well as I, the widening sheet of water between us and the shore on the one side, and on the other the ever-increasing masses of crumbling ice.

At last I suddenly offered to go to Quebec, and bring back help for her. So wild a proposal was in the highest degree impracticable; but I thought that it might lead her to suggest something. As soon as she heard it, she evinced fresh terror.

"Oh, sir!" she moaned, "if you have a human heart, do not leave me! For God's sake, stay a little longer."

"Leave you!" I cried; "never while I have breath. I will stay with you to the last."

But this, instead of reassuring her, merely had the effect of changing her feelings. She grew calmer.

"No," said she, "you must not. I was mad with fear. No—go. You at least can save yourself. Go—fly—leave me!"

"Never!" I repeated. "I only made that proposal—not thinking to save you, but merely supposing that you would feel better at the simple suggestion of something."

"I implore you," she reiterated. "Go—there is yet time. You only risk your life by delay. Don't waste your time on me."

"I could not go if I would," I said, "and I swear I would not go if I could," I cried, impetuously. "I hope you do not take me for anything else than a gentleman."

"Oh, sir, pardon me. Can you think that?—But you have already risked your life once by waiting to save mine—and, oh, do not risk it by waiting again."

"Madame," said I, "you must not only not say such a thing, but you must not even think it. I am here with you, and, being a gentleman, I am here by your side either for life or death. But come—rouse yourself. Don't give up. I'll save you, or die with you. At the same time, let me assure you that I haven't the remotest idea of dying."

She threw at me, from her eloquent eyes, a look of unutterable gratitude, and said not a word.

I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock. There was no time to lose. The day was passing swiftly, and at this rate evening would come on before one might be aware. The thought of standing idle any longer, while the precious hours were passing, was intolerable. Once more I made a hasty survey, and now, pressed and stimulated by the dire exigencies of the hour, I determined to make an effort toward the Quebec side. On that side, it seemed as though the ice which drifted from the other shore was being packed in an unbroken mass. If so, a way over it might be found to a resolute spirit.
I hastily told my companion my plan. She listened with a faint smile.

"I will do all that I can," said she, and I saw with delight that the mere prospect of doing something had aroused her.

My first act was to push the sleigh with its occupant toward the ice-ridge in the centre of the river. The lady strongly objected, and insisted on getting out and helping me. This I positively forbade. I assured her that my strength was quite sufficient for the undertaking, but that hers was not; and if she would save herself, and me, too, she must husband all her resources and obey implicitly. She submitted under protest, and, as I pushed her along, she murmured the most touching expressions of sympathy and of gratitude.

But pushing a sleigh over the smooth ice is no very difficult work, and the load that it contained did not increase the labor in my estimation. Thus we soon approached that long ice-ridge which I have so frequently mentioned. Here I stopped, and began to seek a place which might afford a chance for crossing to the ice-field on the opposite side.

The huge ice-blocks gathered here, where the fields on either side were forced against one another, grinding and breaking up. Each piece was forced up, and, as the grinding process continued, the heap rose higher. At times, the loftiest parts of the ridge toppled over with a tremendous crash, while many other piles seemed about to do the same. To attempt to pass that ridge would be to encounter the greatest peril. In the first place, it would be to invite an avalanche; and then, again, wherever the piles fell, the force of that fall broke the field-ice below, and the water rushed up, making a passage through it quite as hazardous as the former. For a long time I examined without seeing any place which was at all practicable. There was no time, however, to be discouraged; an effort had to be made, and that without delay; so I determined to try for myself, and test one or more places. One place appeared less dangerous than others—a place where a pile of uncommon size had recently fallen. The blocks were of unusual size, and were raised up but a little above the level of the ice on which I stood. These blocks, though swaying slowly up and down, seemed yet to be strong enough for my purpose. I sprang toward the place, and found it practicable.

Then I returned to the lady. She was eager to go. Here we had to give up the sleigh, since to transport that also was not to be thought of.

"Now," said I, "is the time for you to exert all your strength."

"I am ready," said she.

"Hurry, then."

At that moment there burst a thunder-shock. A huge pile farther down had fallen, and bore down the surface-ice. The water rushed boiling and seething upward, and spread far over. There was not a moment to lose. It was now or never; so, snatching her hand, I rushed forward. The water was up to my knees, and sweeping past and whirling back with a furious impetuosity. Through that flood I dragged her, and she followed bravely and quickly. I pulled her up to the first block, then onward to another. Leaping over a third, I had to relinquish her hand for a moment, and then, extending mine once more, I caught hers, and she sprang after me. All these blocks were firm, and our weight did not move their massive forms. One huge piece formed the last stage in our hazardous path. It overlapped the ice on the opposite side. I sprang down, and the next instant the lady was by my side. Thank Heaven! we were over.
Onward then we hurried for our lives, seeking to get as far as possible from that dangerous channel of ice-avalanches and seething waters; and it was not till a safe distance intervened, that I dared to slacken my pace so as to allow my companion to take breath. All this time she had not spoken a word, and had shown a calmness and an energy which contrasted strongly with her previous lethargy and terror.

I saw that the ice in this place was rougher than it had been on the other side. Lumps were upheaved in many places. This was a good sign, for it indicated a close packing in this direction, and less danger of open water, which was the only thing now to be feared. The hope of reaching the shore was now strong within me. That shore, I could perceive, must be some distance below Quebec; but how far I could not tell. I could see the dark outline of the land, but Quebec was now no longer perceptible through the thick storm of sleet.

For a long time, my companion held out nobly, and sustained the rapid progress which I was trying to keep up; but, at length, she began to show evident signs of exhaustion. I saw this with pain, for I was fearful every moment of some new circumstance which might call for fresh exertion from both of us. I would have given anything to have had the sleigh which we were forced to relinquish. I feared that her strength would fail at the trying moment. The distance before us was yet so great that we seemed to have traversed but little. I insisted on her taking my arm and leaning on me for support, and tried to cheer her by making her look back and see how far we had gone. She tried to smile; but the smile was a failure. In her weakness, she began to feel more sensibly the storm from which she had been sheltered to some extent before she left the sleigh. She cowered under the fierce pelt of the pitiless sleet, and clung to me, trembling and shivering with cold.

On and on we walked. The distance seemed interminable. The lady kept up well, considering her increasing exhaustion, saying nothing whatever; but her quick, short breathing was audible, as she panted with fatigue. I felt every shudder that ran through her delicate frame. And yet I did not dare to stop and give her rest; for, aside from the imminent danger of losing our hope of reaching land, a delay, even to take breath, would only expose her the more surely to the effect of the cold. At last, I stopped for a moment, and drew off my overcoat. This, in spite of her protests, I forced her to put on. She threatened, at one time, to sit down on the ice and die, rather than do it.

"Very well, madame," said I. "Then, out of a punctilio, you will destroy, not only yourself, but me. Do I deserve this?"

At this, tears started to her eyes. She submitted.

"Oh, sir," she murmured, "what can I say? It's for your sake that I refuse. I will submit. God bless you—who sent you to my help! God forever bless you!"

I said nothing.

On and on!

Then her steps grew feebler—then her weight rested on me more heavily.

On and on!

She staggered, and low moans succeeded to her heavy panting. At last, with a cry of despair, she fell forward.

I caught her in my arms, and held her up.

"Leave me!" she said, in a faint voice.

"I cannot walk any farther."

"No; I will wait for a while."
"Oh, leave me! Save yourself! Or go ashore, and bring help!"

"No; I will go ashore with you, or not at all."

She sighed, and clung to me.

After a time, she revived a little, and insisted on going onward. This time she walked for some distance. She did this with a stolid, heavy step, and mechanically, like an automaton moved by machinery. Then she stopped again.

"I am dizzy," said she, faintly.

I made her sit down on the ice, and put myself between her and the wind. That rest did much for her. But I was afraid to let her sit more than five minutes. Her feet were saturated, and, in spite of my overcoat, she was still shivering.

"Come," said I; "if we stay any longer, you will die."

She staggered up. She clung to me, and I dragged her on. Then, again, she stopped.

I now tried a last resort, and gave her some brandy from my flask. I had thought of it often, but did not wish to give this until other things were exhausted; for, though the stimulus is an immediate remedy for weakness, yet on the ice, and in the snow, the reaction is dangerous to the last degree. The draught revived her wonderfully.

Starting once more, with new life, she was able to traverse a very great distance; and at length, to my delight, the shore began to appear very near. But now the reaction from the stimulant appeared. She sank down without a word; and another draught, and yet another, was needed to infuse some false strength into her. At length, the shore seemed close by us. Here she gave out utterly.

"I can go no farther," she moaned, as she fell straight down heavily and suddenly on the ice.

"Only one more effort," I said, imploringly. "Take some more brandy."

"It is of no use. Leave me! Get help!"

"See—the shore is near. It is not more than a few rods away."

"I cannot."

I supported her in my arms, for she was leaning on her hand, and slowly sinking downward. Once more I pressed the brandy upon her lips, as her head lay on my shoulder. Her eyes were closed. Down on her marble face the wild storm beat savagely; her lips were bloodless, and her teeth were fixed convulsively. It was only by an effort that I could force the brandy into her mouth. Once more, and for the last time, the fiery liquid gave her a momentary strength. She roused herself from the stupor into which she was sinking, and, springing to her feet with a wild, spasmodic effort, she ran with outstretched hands toward the shore. For about twenty or thirty paces she ran, and, before I could overtake her, she fell once more.

I raised her up, and again supported her. She could move no farther. I sat by her side for a little while, and looked toward the shore. It was close by us now; but, as I looked, I saw a sight which made any further delay impossible.

Directly in front, and only a few feet away, was a dark chasm lying between us and that shore for which we had been striving so earnestly. It was a fathom wide; and there flowed the dark waters of the river, gloomily, warningly, menacingly! To me, that chasm was nothing; but how could she cross it? Besides, there was no doubt that it was widening every moment.

I started up.

"Wait here for a moment," said I, hurriedly.

"The Lady of the Ice."
I left her half reclining on the ice, and ran hastily up and down the chasm. I could see that my fears were true. The whole body of ice was beginning to break away, and drift from this shore also, as it had done from the other. I saw a place not more than five feet wide. Back I rushed to my companion. I seized her, and, lifting her in my arms, without a word, I carried her to that place where the channel was narrowest; and then, without stopping to consider, but impelled by the one fierce desire for safety, I leaped forward, and my feet touched the opposite side.

With a horrible crash, the ice broke beneath me, and I went down. That sound, and the awful sensation of sinking, I shall never forget. But the cake of ice which had given way beneath my feet, though it went down under me, still prevented my sinking rapidly. I flung myself forward, and held up my almost senseless burden as I best could with one arm, while with the other I dug my sharp-pointed stick into the ice and held on for a moment. Then, summoning up my strength, I passed my left arm under my companion, and raised her out of the water upon the ice. My feet seemed sucked by the water underneath the shelf of ice against which I rested; but the iron-pointed stick never slipped, and I succeeded. Then, with a spring, I raised myself up from the water, and clambered out.

My companion had struggled up to her knees, and grasped me feebly, as though to assist me. Then she started to her feet. The horror of sudden death had done this, and had given her a convulsive energy of recoil from a hideous fate. Thus she sprang forward, and ran for some distance. I hastened after her, and, seizing her arm, drew it in mine. But at that moment her short-lived strength failed her, and she sank once more. I looked all around—the shore was only a few yards off. A short distance away was a high, cone-shaped mass of ice, whose white sheen was distinct amid the gloom. I recognized it at once.

"Courage, courage!" I cried. "We are at Montmorency. There is a house not far away. Only one more effort."

She raised her head feebly.

"Do you see it? Montmorency! the ice-cone of the Falls!" I cried, eagerly.

Her head sank back again.

"Look! look! We are saved! we are near houses!"

The only answer was a moan. She sank down lower. I grasped her so as to sustain her, and she lay senseless in my arms.

There was now no more hope of any further exertion from her. Strength and sense had deserted her. There was only one thing to be done.

I took her in my arms, and carried her toward the shore. How I clambered up that steep bank, I do not remember. At any rate, I succeeded in reaching the top, and sank exhausted there, holding my burden under the dark, sighing evergreens.

Rising once more, I raised her up, and made my way to a house. The inmates were kind, and full of sympathy. I committed the lady to their care, and fell exhausted on a settle in front of the huge fireplace.

CHAPTER VIII.

I FLY BACK, AND SEND THE DOCTOR TO THE RESCUE.—RETURN TO THE SPOT.—FLIGHT OF THE BIRD.—PERPLEXITY, ASTONISHMENT, WONDER, AND DESPAIR.—"PAS UN MOT, MONSIEUR!"

A long time passed, and I waited in great anxiety. Meanwhile, I had changed
THE LADY OF THE ICE.

my clothes, and sat by the fire robed in the picturesque costume of a French habitant, while my own saturated garments were drying elsewhere. I tried to find out if there was a doctor anywhere in the neighborhood, but learned that there was none nearer than Quebec. The people were such dolts, that I determined to set out myself for the city, and either send a doctor or fetch one. After immense trouble, I succeeded in getting a horse; and, just before starting, I was encouraged by hearing that the lady had recovered from her swoon, and was much better, though somewhat feverish.

It was a wild journey.

The storm was still raging; the road was abominable, and was all one glare of frozen sleet, which had covered it with a slippery surface, except where there arose disintegrated ice-hummocks and heaps of slush—the débris of giant drifts. Moreover, it was as dark as Egypt. My progress, therefore, was slow. A boy went with me as far as the main road, and, after seeing me under way, he left me to my own devices. The horse was very aged, and, I fear, a little rheumatic. Besides, I have reason to believe that he was blind. That did not make any particular difference, though; for the darkness was so intense, that eyes were as useless as they would be to the eyeless fishes of the Mammoth Cave. I don't intend to prolong my description of this midnight ride. Sufficient it is to say that the horse walked all the way, and, although it was midnight when I started, it was near morning when I reached my quarters.

I hurried at once to the doctor, and, to his intense disgust, aroused him and implored his services. I made it a personal matter, and put it in such an affecting light, that he consented to go; but he assured me that it was the greatest sacrifice to friendship that he had ever made in his life. I gave him the most explicit directions, and did not leave him till I saw him on horseback, and trotting, half asleep, down the street.

Then I went to my room, completely used up after such unparalleled exertions. I got a roaring fire made, established myself on my sofa immediately in front of it, and sought to restore my exhausted frame by hot potations. My intention was to rest for a while, till I felt thoroughly warmed, and then start for Montmorency to see about the lady. With this in my mind, and a pipe in my mouth, and a tumbler of toddy at my elbow, I reclined on my deep, soft, old-fashioned, and luxurious sofa; and, thus situated, I fell off before I knew it into an exceedingly profound sleep.

When I awoke, it was broad day. I started up, looked at my watch, and, to my horror, found that it was half-past twelve. In a short time, I had flung off my habitant clothes, dressed myself, got my own horse, and galloped off as fast as possible.

I was deeply vexed at myself for sleeping so long; but I found comfort in the thought that the doctor had gone on before. The storm had gone down, and the sky was clear. The sun was shining brightly. The roads were abominable, but not so bad as they had been, and my progress was rapid. So I went on at a rattling pace, not sparing my horse, and occupying my mind with thoughts of the lady whom I had saved, when suddenly, about three miles from Quebec, I saw a familiar figure advancing toward me.

It was the doctor!

He moved along slowly, and, as I drew nearer, I saw that he looked very much worn out, very peevish, and very discontented.
"Well, old man," said I, "how did you find her?"

"Find her?" growled the doctor—"I didn't find her at all. If this is a hoax," he continued, "all I can say, Macrorie, is this, that it's a devilish stupid one."

"A hoax? What—didn't find her?" I gasped.

"Find her? Of course not. There's no such a person. Why, I could not even find the house."

"What—do you mean? I—I don't understand—" I faltered.

"Why," said the doctor, who saw my deep distress and disappointment, "I mean simply this: I've been riding about this infernal country all day, been to Montmorency, called at fifty houses, and couldn't find anybody that knew any thing at all about any lady whatever."

At this, my consternation was so great that I couldn't say one single word. This news almost took my breath away. The doctor looked sternly at me for some time, and then was about to move on.

This roused me.

"What!" I cried; "you're not thinking of going back?"

"Back? Of course, I am. That's the very thing I'm going to do."

"For God's sake, doctor," I cried, earnestly, "don't go just yet! I tell you, the lady is there, and her condition is a most perilous one. I told you before how I saved her. I left there at midnight, last night, in spite of my fatigue, and travelled all night to get you. I promised her that you would be there early this morning. It's now nearly two in the afternoon. Good Heavens! doctor, you won't leave a fellow in such a fix?"

"Macrorie," said the doctor, "I'm half dead with fatigue. I did it for your sake, and I wouldn't have done it for another soul—no, not even for Jack Randolph. So be considerate, my boy."

"Doctor," I cried, earnestly, "it's a case of life and death!"

A long altercation now followed; but the end of it was that the doctor yielded, and, in spite of his fatigue, turned back, grumbling and growling.

So we rode back together—the doctor, groaning and making peevish remarks; I, oblivious of all this, and careless of my friend's discomfort. My mind was full of visions of the lady—the fair unknown. I was exceedingly anxious and troubled at the thought that all this time she had been alone, without any medical assistance. I pictured her to myself as sinking rapidly into fever and delirium. Stimulated by all these thoughts, I hurried on, while the doctor with difficulty followed. At length, we arrived within half a mile of the Falls; but I could not see any signs of the house which I wished to find, or of the road that led to it. I looked into all the roads that led to the river; but none seemed like that one which I had traversed.

The doctor grew every moment more vexed.

"Look here now, Macrorie," said he, at last—"I'll go no farther—no, not a step. I'm used up. I'll go into the nearest house, and wait."

Saying this, he turned abruptly, and went to a house that was close by.

I then dismounted, went to the upper bank of the Montmorency, where it joins the St. Lawrence below the Falls, and looked down.

The ice was all out. The place which yesterday had been the scene of my struggle for life was now one vast sheet of dark-blue water. As I looked at it, an involuntary shudder passed through me; for now I saw the full peril of my situation.
Looking along the river, I saw the place where I must have landed, and on the top of the steep bank I saw a house which seemed to be the one where I had found refuge. Upon this, I went back, and, getting the doctor, we went across the fields to this house. I knocked eagerly at the door. It was opened, and in the person of the habitant before me I recognized my host of the evening before.

“How is madame?” I asked, hurriedly and anxiously.

“Madame?”

“Yes, madame—the lady, you know.”

“Madame? She is not here.”

“Not here!” I cried.

“Non, monsieur.”

“Not here? What! Not here?” I cried again. “But she must be here. Didn’t I bring her here last night?”

“Certainly, monsieur; but she’s gone home.”

At this, there burst from the doctor a peal of laughter—so loud, so long, so savage, and so brutal, that I forgot in a moment all that he had been doing for my sake, and felt an almost irresistible inclination to punch his head. Only I didn’t; and, perhaps, it was just as well. The sudden inclination passed, and there remained nothing but an overwhelming sense of disappointment, by which I was crushed for a few minutes, while still the doctor’s mocking laughter sounded in my ears.

“How was it?” I asked, at length—“how did she get off? When I left, she was in a fever, and wanted a doctor.”

“After you left, monsieur, she slept, and awoke, toward morning, very much better. She dressed, and then wanted us to get a conveyance to take her to Quebec. We told her that you had gone for a doctor, and that she had better wait. But this, she said, was impossible. She would not think of it. She had to go to Quebec as soon as possible, and entreated us to find some conveyance. So we found a wagon at a neighbor’s, threw some straw in it and some skins over it, and she went away.”

“She went!” I repeated, in an imbecile way.

“Oui, monsieur.”

“And didn’t she leave any word?”

“Monsieur?”

“ Didn’t she leave any message for—for me?”

“Non, monsieur.”

“Not a word?” I asked, mournfully and despairingly.

The reply of the habitant was a crushing one:

“Pas un mot, monsieur!”

The doctor burst into a shriek of sardonic laughter.

CHAPTER IX.

BY ONE’S OWN FIRESIDE.—THE COMFORTS OF A BACHELOR.—CHewing THE CUD OF SWEET AND BITTER FANCY.—A DISCOVERY Full OF MORTIFICATION AND EMBARRASSMENT.—JACK RANDOLPH AGAIN.—NEWS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

By six o’clock in the evening I was back in my room again. The doctor had chaffed me so villanously all the way back that my disappointment and mortification had vanished, and had given place to a feeling of resentment. I felt that I had been ill-treated. After saving a girl’s life, to be dropped so quietly and so completely, was more than flesh and blood could stand. And then there was that confounded doctor. He fairly revelled in my situation, and forgot all about his fatigue. However, before I left him, I extorted from him a promise to say nothing about it, swearing
if he didn't I'd sell out and quit the service. This promise he gave, with the remark that he would reserve the subject for his own special use.

Once within my own room, I made myself comfortable in my own quiet way, viz.:

1. A roaring, red-hot fire.
2. Curtains close drawn.
3. Sofa pulled up beside said fire.
4. Table beside sofa.
5. Hot water.
6. Whiskey.
7. Tobacco.
8. Pipes.
10. Sugar.
11. Tumblers.
12. Various other things not necessary to mention, all of which contributed to throw over my perturbed spirit a certain divine calm.

Under such circumstances, while every moment brought forward some new sense of rest and tranquillity, my mind wandered back in a kind of lazy reverie over the events of the past two days.

Once more I wandered over the crumbling ice; once more I floundered through the deep pools of water; once more I halted in front of that perilous ice-ridge, with my back to the driving storm and my eyes searching anxiously for a way of progress. The frowning cliff, with its flag floating out stiff in the tempest, the dim shore opposite, the dark horizon, the low moan of the river as it struggled against its icy burden, all these came back again. Then, through all this, I rushed forward, scrambling over the ice-ridge, reaching the opposite plain to hurry forward to the shore. Then came the rushing sleigh, the recoiling horse, the swift retreat, the mad race along the brink of the icy edge, the terrible plunge into the deep, dark water. Then came the wild, half-human shriek of the drowning horse, and the sleigh with its despairing freight drifting down toward me. Through all this there broke forth amid the clouds of that reverie, the vision of that pale, agonized face, with its white lips and imploring eyes—the face of her whom I had saved.

So I had saved her, had I? Yes, there was no doubt of that. Never would I lose the memory of that unparalleled journey to Montmorency Fall, as I toiled on, dragging with me that frail, fainting, despairing companion. I had sustained her; I had cheered her; I had stimulated her; and, finally, at that supreme moment, when she fell down in sight of the goal, I had put forth the last vestige of my own strength in bearing her to a place of safety.

And so she had left me.

Left me—without a word—without a hint—without the remotest sign of any thing like recognition, not to speak of gratitude!

*Pas un mot!*

Should I ever see her again?

This question, which was very natural under the circumstances, caused me to make an effort to recall the features of my late companion. Strange to say, my effort was not particularly successful. A white, agonized face was all that I remembered, and afterward a white, senseless face, belonging to a prostrate figure, which I was trying to raise. This was all. What that face might look like in repose, I found it impossible to conjecture.

And now here was a ridiculous and mortifying fact. I found myself haunted by this white face and these despairing eyes, yet for the life of me I could not reduce that face to a natural expression so as to learn what it might look like in common
life. Should I know her again if I met her? I could not say. Would she know me? I could not answer that. Should I ever be able to find her? How could I tell?

Baffled and utterly at a loss what to do toward getting the identity of the subject of my thoughts, I wandered off into various moods. First I became cynical, but, as I was altogether too comfortable to be morose, my cynicism was of a good-natured character. Then I made merry over my own mishaps and misadventures. Then I reflected, in a lofty, philosophic frame of mind, upon the faithlessness of woman, and, passing from this into metaphysics, I soon boozed off into a gentle, a peaceful, and a very consoling doze. When I awoke, it was morning, and I concluded to go to bed.

On the morrow, at no matter what o'clock, I had just finished breakfast, when I heard a well-known footstep, and Jack Randolph burst in upon me in his usual style.

"Well, old chap," he cried, "where the mischief have you been for the last two days, and what have you been doing with yourself? I heard that you got back from Point Levi—though how the deuce you did it I can't imagine—and that you'd gone off on horseback nobody knew where. I've been here fifty times since I saw you last. Tell you what, Macrorie, it wasn't fair to me to give me the slip this way, when you knew my delicate position, and all that. I can't spare you for a single day. I need your advice. Look here, old fellow, I've got a letter."

And saying this, Jack drew a letter from his pocket, with a grave face, and opened it.

So taken up was Jack with his own affairs, that he did not think of inquiring into the reasons of my prolonged absence. For my part, I listened to him in a dreamy way, and, when he drew out the letter, it was only with a strong effort that I was able to conjecture what it might be. So much had passed since I had seen him, that our last conversation had become very dim and indistinct in my memory.

"Oh," said I, at last, as I began to recall the past, "the letter—h'm—ah—the—the widow. Oh, yes, I understand."

Jack looked at me in surprise.

"The widow?" said he. "Pooh, man! what are you talking about? Are you crazy? This is from her—from Miss—that is—from the other one, you know."


"Miss Phillips!" cried Jack. "Hang it, man, what's the matter with you to-day? Haven't I told you all about it? Didn't I tell you what I wouldn't breathe to another soul—that is, excepting two or three?—and now, when I come to you at the crisis of my fate, you forget all about it."

"Nonsense!" said I. "The fact is, I went to bed very late, and am scarcely awake yet. Go on, old boy, I'm all right. Well, what does she say?"

"I'll be hanged if you know what you're talking about," said Jack, pettishly.

"Nonsense! I'm all right now; go on."

"You don't know who this letter is from."

"Yes, I do."

"Who is it?" said Jack, watching me with jealous scrutiny.

"Why," said I, "it's that other one—the—hang it! I don't know her name, so I'll call her Number Three, or Number Four, whichever you like."

"You're a cool hand, any way," said Jack, sulkily. "Is this the way you take a matter of life and death?"

"Life and death?" I repeated.

"Life and death!" said Jack. "Yes,
life and death. Why, see here, Macrorie, I'll be hanged if I don't believe that you've forgotten every word I told you about my scrape. If that's the case, all I can say is, that I'm not the man to force my confidences where they are so very unimportant."

And Jack made a move toward the door. "Stop, Jack," said I. "The fact is, I've been queery for a couple of days. I had a beastly time on the river. Talk about life and death! Why, man, it was the narrowest scratch with me you ever saw. I didn't go to Point Levi at all."

"The deuce you didn't!"

"No; I pulled up at Montmorency."

"The deuce you did! How's that?"

"Oh, never mind; I'll tell you some other time. At any rate, if I seem dazed or confused, don't notice it. I'm coming round. I'll only say this, that I've lost a little of my memory, and am glad I didn't lose my life. But go on. I'm up to it now, Jack. You wrote to Number Three, proposing to elope, and were taking your existence on her answer. You wished me to order a head-stone for you at Anderson's, four feet by eighteen inches, with nothing on it but the name and date, and not a word about the virtues, et cetera. There, you see, my memory is all right at last. And now, old boy, what does she say? When did you get it?"

"I got it this morning," said Jack. "It was a long delay. She is always prompt. Something must have happened to delay her. I was getting quite wild, and would have put an end to myself if it hadn't been for Louie. And then, you know, the widow's getting to be a bit of a bore. Look here—what do you think of my selling out, buying a farm in Minnesota, and taking little Louie there?"

"What!" I cried. "Look here, Jack, whatever you do, don't, for Heaven's sake, get poor little Louie entangled in your affairs."

"Oh, don't you fret," said Jack, dolefully. "No fear about her. She's all right, so far.—But, see here, there's the letter."

And saying this, he tossed over to me the letter from "Number Three," and, filling a pipe, began smoking vigorously.

The letter was a singular one. It was highly romantic, and full of devotion. The writer, however, declined to accept of Jack's proposition. She pleaded her father; she couldn't leave him. She implored Jack to wait, and finally subscribed herself his till death. But the name which she signed was "Stella," and nothing more; and this being evidently a pet name or a *nom de plume*, threw no light whatever upon her real personality.

"Well," said Jack, after I had read it over about nine times, "what do you think of that?"

"It gives you some reprieve, at any rate," said I.

"Reprieve?" said Jack. "I don't think it's the sort of letter that a girl should write to a man who told her that he was going to blow his brains out on her doorstep. It doesn't seem to be altogether the right sort of thing under the circumstances."

"Why, confound it, man, isn't this the very letter that you wanted to get? You didn't really want to run away with her? You said 'so yourself.'"

"Oh, that's all right; but a fellow likes to be appreciated."

"So, after all, you wanted her to elope with you?"

"Well, not that, exactly. At the same time, I didn't want a point-blank refusal."

"You ought to be glad she showed so much sense. It's all the better for you.
It is an additional help to you in your difficulties."

"I don't see how it helps me," said Jack, in a kind of growl. "I don't see why she refused to run off with a fellow."

Now such was the perversity of Jack that he actually felt ill-natured about this letter, although it was the very thing that he knew was best for him. He was certainly relieved from one of his many difficulties, but at the same time he was vexed and mortified at this rejection of his proposal. And he dwelt upon his disappointment until at length he brought himself to believe that "Number Three's" letter was something like a personal slight, if not an insult.

He dropped in again toward evening.

"Macrorie," said he, "there's one place where I always find sympathy. What do you say, old fellow, to going this evening to—"

CHAPTER X.

"BERTON'S?—BEST PLACE IN THE TOWN.—
GIRLS ALWAYS GLAD TO SEE A FELLOW.—
PLENTY OF CHAT, AND LOTS OF FUN.—NO END OF LARKS, YOU KNOW, AND ALL THAT SORT OF THING."

In order to get rid of my vexation, mortification, humiliation, and general aggravation, I allowed Jack to persuade me to go that evening to Colonel Berton's. Not that it needed much persuasion. On the contrary, it was a favorite resort of mine. Both of us were greatly addicted to dropping in upon that hospitable and fascinating household. The girls were among the most lively and genial good fellows that girls could ever be. Old Berton had retired from the army with enough fortune of his own to live in good style, and his girls had it all their own way. They were essentially of the military order. They had all been brought up, so to speak, in the army, and their world did not extend beyond it. There were three of them—Laura, the eldest, beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished, with a strong leaning toward Ritualism; Nina, innocent, childish, and kitten-like; and Louie, the universal favorite, absurd, whimsical, fantastic, a desperate tease, and as pretty and graceful as it is possible for any girl to be. An aunt did the maternal for them, kept house, chaperoned, duennaed, and generally overlooked them. The colonel himself was a fine specimen of the vieux militaire. He loved to talk of the life which he had left behind, and fight his battles over again, and all his thoughts were in the army. But the girls were, of course, the one attraction in his hospitable house. The best of it was, they were all so accustomed to homage, that even the most desperate attentions left them heart-whole, in maiden meditation, fancy free. No danger of overflowing sentiment with them. No danger of blighted affections or broken hearts. No nonsense there, my boy. All fair, and pleasant, and open, and above-board, you know. Clear, honest eyes, that looked frankly into yours; fresh, youthful faces; lithe, elastic figures; merry laughs; sweet smiles; soft, kindly voices, and all that sort of thing. In short, three as kind, gentle, honest, sound, pure, and healthy hearts as ever beat.

The very atmosphere of this delightful house was soothing, and the presence of these congenial spirits brought a balm to each of us, which healed our wounded hearts. In five minutes Jack was far away out of sight of all his troubles—and in five minutes more I had forgotten all about my late adventure, and the sorrows that had resulted from it.

After a time, Jack gravitated toward
Louie, leaving me with Laura, talking mediævalism. Louie was evidently taking Jack to task, and very energetically too. Fragments of their conversation reached my ears from time to time. She had heard something about Mrs. Finnimore, but what it was, and whether she believed it or not, could not be perceived from what she said. Jack fought her off skilfully, and, at last, she made an attack from another quarter.

"Oh, Captain Randolph," said she, "what a delightful addition we're going to have to our Quebec society!"

"Ah!" said Jack, "what is that?"

"How very innocent! Just as if you are not the one who is most concerned."

"I?"

"Of course. You. Next to me."

"I don't understand."

"Come, now, Captain Randolph, how very ridiculous to pretend to be so ignorant!"

"Ignorant?" said Jack; "ignorant is not the word. I am in Egyptian darkness, I assure you."

"Egyptian darkness — Egyptian nonsense! Will it help you any if I tell you her name?"

"Her name! Whose name? What 'her?'"

Louie laughed long and merrily.

"Well," said she, at length, "for pure, perfect, utter, childlike innocence, commend me to Captain Randolph! And now, sir," she resumed, "will you answer me one question?"

"Certainly—or one hundred thousand."

"Well, what do you think of Miss Phillips?"

"I think she is a very delightful person," said Jack, fluently—"the most delightful I have ever met with, present company excepted."

"That is to be understood, of course; but what do you think of her coming to live here?"

"Coming to live here!"

"Yes, coming to live here," repeated Louie, playfully imitating the tone of evident consternation with which Jack spoke.

"What! Miss Phillips?"

"Yes, Miss Phillips."

"Here?"

"Certainly."

"Not here in Quebec?"

"Yes, here in Quebec—but I must say that you have missed your calling in life. Why do you not go to New York and make your fortune as an actor? You must take part in our private theatricals the next time we have any."

"I assure you," said Jack, "I never was so astonished in my life."

"How well you counterfeit!" said Louie; "never mind. Allow me to congratulate you. We'll overlook the little piece of acting, and regard rather the delightful fact. Joined once more—ne'er to part—hand to hand—heart to heart—memories sweet—ne'er to fade—all my own—fairest maid! And then your delicious remembrances of Sissiboo."

"Sissiboo?" gasped Jack.

"Sissiboo," repeated Louie, with admirable gravity. "Her birth-place, and hence a sacred spot. She used to be called 'the maid of Sissiboo.' But, in choosing a place to live in, let me warn you against Sissiboo. Take some other place. You've been all over New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Take Petticodiac, or Washe Aenook, or Shubenacadie, or Memramcook, or Rochebucto, or Chiputneciscook, or the Kennebecasis Valley. At the same time, I have my preferences for Piserinco, or Quaco."

At all this, Jack seemed for a time completely overwhelmed, and sat listening to Louie with a sort of imbecile smile. Her
allusion to Miss Phillips evidently troubled him, and, as to her coming to Quebec, he did not know what to say. Louie twitted him for some time longer, but at length he got her away into a corner, where he began a conversation in a low but very earnest tone, which, however, was sufficiently audible to make his remarks understood by all in the room.

And what was he saying?
He was disclaiming all intentions with regard to Miss Phillips.

And Louie was listening quietly!
Perhaps believing him!!

The scamp!!!

And now I noticed that Jack's unhappy tendency to—well, to conciliate ladies—was in full swing.

Didn't I see him, then and there, slyly try to take poor little Louie's hand, utterly forgetful of the disastrous result of a former attempt on what he believed to be that same hand? Didn't I see Louie civilly draw it away, and move her chair farther off from his? Didn't I see him flush up and begin to utter apologies? Didn't I hear Louie begin to talk of operas, and things in general; and soon after, didn't I see her rise and come over to Laura, and Nina, and me, as we were playing dummy? Methinks I did. Oh, Louie! Oh, Jack! Is she destined to be Number Four! or, good Heavens! Number Forty! Why, the man's mad! He engages himself to every girl he sees!

Home again.

Jack was full of Louie.

"Such fun! such life! Did you ever see any thing like her?"

"But the widow, Jack?"

"Ifang the widow!"

"Miss Phillips?"

"Bother Miss Phillips!"

"And Number Three?"

Jack's face grew sombre, and he was silent for a time. At length a sudden thought seized him.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I got a letter to-day, which I haven't opened. Excuse me a moment, old chap."

So saying, he pulled a letter from his pocket, opened it, and read it.

He told me the contents.

It was from Miss Phillips, and she told her dearest Jack that her father was about moving to Quebec to live.

CHAPTER XI.

"MACRORIE, MY BOY, HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANDERSON'S YET?"—"NO."—"WELL, THEN, I WANT YOU TO ATTEND TO THAT BUSINESS OF THE STONE TO-MORROW. DON'T FORGET THE SIZE—FOUR FEET BY EIGHTEEN INCHES; AND NOTHING BUT THE NAME AND DATE. THE TIME'S COME AT LAST. THERE'S NO PLACE FOR ME BUT THE COLD GRAVE, WHERE THE PENSIVE PASSER-BY MAY DROP A TEAR OVER THE MOURNFUL FATE OF JACK RANDOLPH. AMEN. R. I. P."

Such was the remarkable manner in which Jack Randolph accosted me, as he entered my room on the following day at about midnight. His face was more rueful than ever, and, what was more striking, his clothes and hair seemed neglected. This convinced me more than any thing that he had received some new blow, and that it had struck home.

"You seem hard hit, old man," said I.

"Where is it? Who is it?"

Jack groaned.

"Has Miss Phillips come?"

"No."

"Is it the widow?"

"No."

"Number Three?"

Jack shook his head.
"Not duns?"
"No."
"Then I give up."
"It's Louie," said Jack, with an expression of face that was as near an approximation to what is called sheepishness as any thing I ever saw.
"Louie?" I repeated.
"Yes—"
"What of her? What has she been doing? How is it possible? Good Heavens! you haven't—" I stopped at the fearful suspicion that came to me.
"Yes, I have!" said Jack, sulkily. "I know what you mean. I've proposed to her."

I started up from the sofa on which I was lounging—my pipe dropped to the ground—a tumbler followed. I struck my clinched fist on the table.
"Randolph!" said I, "this is too much. Confound it, man! Are you mad, or are you a villain? What the devil do you mean by trifling with the affections of that little girl? By Heavens! Jack Randolph, if you carry on this game with her, there's not a man in the regiment that won't join to crush you."

"Pitch in," said Jack quietly, looking at me at the same time with something like approval. "That's the right sort of thing. That's just what I've been saying to myself. I've been swearing like a trooper at myself all the way here. If there's any one on earth that every fellow ought to stand up for, it's little Louie. And now you see the reason why I want you to attend to that little affair of the gravestone."

At Jack's quiet tone, my excitement subsided. I picked up my pipe again, and thought it over.

"The fact is, Jack," said I, after about ten minutes of profound smoking, "I think you'll have to carry out that little plan of yours. Sell out as soon as you can, and take Louie with you to a farm in Minnesota."

"Easier said than done," said Jack, sententiously.
"Done? why, man, it's easy enough. You can drop the other three, and retire from the scene. That'll save Louie from coming to grief."
"Yes; but it won't make her come to Minnesota."
"Why not? She's just the girl to go anywhere with a fellow."
"But not with Jack Randolph."
"What humbug are you up to now? I don't understand you."
"So I see," said Jack, dryly. "You take it for granted that because I proposed, Louie accepted. Whereas, that didn't happen to be the case. I proposed, but Louie disposed of me pretty effectually."

"Mittened?" cried I.
"Mittened!" said Jack, solemnly.
"Hence the gravestone."
"But how, in the name of wonder, did that happen?"
"Easily enough. Louie happens to have brains. That's the shortest way to account for her refusal of my very valuable devotions. But I'll tell you all about it, and, after that, we'll decide about the headstone."

"You see, I went up there this evening, and the other girls were off somewhere, and so Louie and I were alone. The aunt was in the room, but she soon dozed off. Well, we had great larks, no end of fun—she chaffing and twitting me about no end of things, and especially the widow; so, do you know, I told her I had a great mind to tell her how it happened; and excited her curiosity by saying it all originated in a
mistake. This, of course, made her wild to know all about it, and so I at last told her the whole thing—the mistake, you know, about the hand, and all that—and my horror. Well, hang me, if I didn’t think she’d go into fits. I never saw her laugh so much before. As soon as she could speak, she began to remind me of the approaching advent of Miss Phillips, and asked me what I was going to do. She didn’t appear to be at all struck by the fact that lay at the bottom of my disclosures; that it was her own hand that had caused the mischief, but went on at a wild rate about my approaching ‘sentimental see-saw,’ as she called it, when my whole time would have to be divided between my two fiancés. She remarked that the old proverb called man a pendulum between a smile and a tear, but that I was the first true case of a human pendulum which she had ever seen.

“Now the little scamp was so perfectly fascinating while she was teasing me, that I felt myself overcome with a desperate fondness for her; so, seeing that the old aunt was sound asleep, I blurted out all my feelings. I swore that she was the only—”

“Oh, omit all that. I know—but what bosh to say to a sensible girl!”

“Well, you know, Louie held her handkerchief to her face, while I was speaking, and I—ass, dolt, and idiot that I was—felt convinced that she was crying. Her frame shook with convulsive shivers, that I took for repressed sobs. I saw the little hand that held the little white handkerchief to her face—the same slender little hand that was the cause of my scrape with Mrs. Finnimore—and, still continuing the confession of my love, I thought I would soothe her grief, I couldn’t help it. I was fairly carried away. I reached forward my hand, and tried to take hers, all the time saying no end of spooney things.

“But the moment I touched her hand, she rolled her chair back, and snatched it away—

“And then she threw back her head—

“And then there came such a peal of musical laughter, that I swear it’s ringing in my ears yet.

“What made it worse was, not merely what she considered the fun of my proposal, but the additional thought that suddenly flashed upon her, that I had just now so absurdly mistaken her emotion. For, confound it all! as I reached out my hand, I said a lot of rubbish, and, among other things, implored her to let me wipe her tears. This was altogether too much. Wipe her tears! And, Heavens and earth, she was shaking to pieces all the time with nothing but laughter. Wipe her tears! Oh, Macrorie! Did you ever hear of such an ass?

“Well, you know she couldn’t get over it for ever so long, but laughed no end, while I sat utterly amazed at the extent to which I had made an ass of myself. However, she got over it at last.

‘‘Well,’’ said I, ‘I hope you feel better.’

‘‘Thanks, yes; but don’t get into a temper. Will you promise to answer me one question?’

‘‘Certainly; most happy. If you think it worth while to do any thing else but laugh at me, I ought to feel flattered.’

‘‘Now, that’s what I call temper, and you must be above such a thing. After all, I’m only a simple little girl, and you—that is, it was so awfully absurd.’

“And here she seemed about to burst forth afresh. But she didn’t.

‘‘What I was going to ask,’ she began, in a very grave way, ‘what I was going to ask is this, If it is a fair question,
'MACEORIE, MY BOY, HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANDERSON'S YET?" 39
how many of

these

entanglements do

little

you happen to have just now
"

'

'

Oh, Louie

I began, in

!

"'Five?'
"

'

?

mournful and

reproachful tones.

"

her

Oh

'

don't, don't,' she cried, covering
'

don't begin

face,

stand

I can't

;

Please

it.

a

don't, like

ple-e-e-e-e-ease

me

looked at
sion of

mock

and

with such a grotesque expres-

knocked un-

entreaty, that I

haven't I told you

all ?

Four,' she persisted.

'

'

to press

I,

"

'

Three

'

?

was

'

Three

me

'

she cried.

!

tell

Oh,

it.

I'm not very quick, and

trying, in a dazed way, to turn

me

Oh, do

!

all

'

Three

about

please

tell

me

all.

"And

what I

that's

'

said

call,'

she,

at

I.

Captain Randolph, that everybody

"

Well," said he.

loves,

and in whose

innumer-

"

You

And now

"

Yes, but I did," said he.

"

You

let

ask my question again How many ?
How many what ? said I.

me
'

"

'

Oh, you know very

"

'

How

'

'

"

'

well.'

can I know, when you won't say

what you mean
"

?

How many

'

entanglements

it,

!

and the cause

Ah, now, that

is

" Nonsense '
"
Twenty, then
!

'

"

'

"

'

Ten ?

absurd

?
'

!

'

Of course

I didn't

"
!

me

with a fixed and slightly stony

me

you wish

to

Why

you know

all

'

my feelings

sion for

"

the

it

;

little

as

isn't

witch.
as

more emphatic

which now was largely protracted.

And how

at length, as

not frank

I sought expres-

in the

did she take

it ?

" I
asked,

soon as I found voice to

speak.

"

As

ed to

usual.

my

Teased me, no end.

recent proposal.

Allud.

Asked me

if I

had intended her to be Number Four, and
declared her belief that I had thirty rather

'

How

if

Are there as many

fifty?'

'

if

" Not about Number Three ? "
"
Yes, Number Three," said Jack, look-

whistle,

friendly or honest,' said

"

you couldn't."

Words were useless, and

Engagements,

Come, now.

I.

stare.

?

be so very explicit.'
" * What nonsense

'

?

'

'

didn't

be hanged

I'll

ing at

'

about

"

didn't really tell her," said

'

Entanglements

" Yes.

"

'

:

"

teased, un-

hesitated.

Well," said

ioned

able friends take a deep interest.

tell

Oh, do,

last"

Jack

a nice, good, sensible, old-fash-

affairs all his

knew

I

then she began, and she teased

til

Now

it off.

ple-e-e-e-ease tell me.'

in her easy-chair.

placidly,

!

Oh, do

it.

and she coaxed, and coaxed and

'

a fellow

she repeated.

" I was silent.

der, and burst out laughing.
"
She at once settled herself comfortably

"

'

this way.'

"

clasped her hands

she

this

Why,

'

good Captain Randolph.'

"At

'

'

Three, then'
" It isn't
fair,' said

I really cannot stand

don't

Now,

"

"

"

you only knew how absurd you look
when you are sentimental. You are al-

If

lous!

No.'

"'No'

it.

ways so funny, you know ; and, -when you
try to be solemn, it looks so awfully ridicu-

'

"'Four?'

'

than three. Finally, the aunt waked up, and
wanted to know what we were laughing at.

Whereupon Louie
not.'

said that she

was laughan

of mine, about
ing at a ridiculous story


Indian juggler who could keep three oranges in the air at the same time.

"'Captain Randolph,' said she, 'you know all about Frederick the Great, of course?'

'Of course,' I said, 'and Alexander the Great also, and Julius Caesar, and Nebuchadnezzar, as the poet says.'

"'Perhaps you remember," said Louie, in a grave tone, for her aunt was wide awake now, 'that the peculiar excellence of the genius of that great monarch consisted in his successful efforts to encounter the coalition raised against him. Though subject to the attacks of the three united powers of France, Austria, and Russia, he was still able to repel them, and finally rescued himself from destruction. Three assailants could not overpower him, and surely others may take courage from his example.'

"And after that little speech I came away, and here I am."

For some time we sat in silence. Jack did not seem to expect any remarks from me, but appeared to be rapt in his own thoughts. For my part, I had nothing whatever to say, and soon became equally rapt in my meditations.

And what were they about?

What? Why, the usual subject which had filled my mind for the past few days — my adventure on the river, and my mysterious companion. Mysterious though she was, she was evidently a lady, and, though I could not be sure about her face, I yet could feel sure that she was beautiful. So very romante an adventure had an unusual charm, and this charm was heightened to a wonderful degree by the mystery of her sudden and utter disappearance.

And now, since Jack had been so very confidential with me, I determined to return that confidence, and impart my secret to him. Perhaps he could help me. At any rate, he was the only person to whom I could think of telling it.

So you see—

CHAPTER XII.

MY ADVENTURES REHEARSED TO JACK RANDOLPH.—"MY DEAR FELLOW, YOU DON'T SAY SO!"—"'PON MY LIFE, YES."—"BY JOVE! OLD CHAP, HOW CLOSE YOU'VE BEEN! YOU MUST HAVE NO END OF SECRETS. AND WHAT'S BECOME OF THE LADY? WHO IS SHE?"

Who is she? Ay. Who, indeed? Hadn't I been torturing my brain for seventy-nine hours, sleeping as well as waking, with that one unanswered and apparently unanswerable question?

"Who is she?" repeated Jack.

"Well," said I, "that's the very thing that I wish to find out, and I want you to help me in it. I told you that she didn't leave any message—"

"But, didn't you find out her name?"

"No."

"By Jove! You're a queer lot. Why, I'd have found out her name the first thing."

"But I didn't—and now I want your help to find out not only her name, but herself."

At this Jack rose, loaded his pipe solemnly, and, with the air of one who is making preparations for a work of no common kind, lighted it, flung himself back in the easy-chair, and sent forth vast volumes of smoke, which might have been considered as admirably symbolical of the state of our minds.

"Well, Macrorie," said he, at last, "I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go round to all the hotels, and examine the lists."

"Pooh!"
"Well, then, take the directory and hunt up all the names."

"Nonsense!"

"Why 'nonsense'?"

"Because I don't know her name. Didn't I impress that upon your mind?"

"By Jove!" cried Jack Randolph, after which he again relapsed into silence.

"See here, Macrorie," said he, at length, "I have it."

"What?"

"Go round next Sunday to all the churches."

"What's the use of that?"

"Go round the churches," repeated Jack, "scan every bonnet—and then, if you don't see her, why then, why—go to the photographic saloons. You'll be sure to find her picture there. By Jove! Why, Macrorie, the game's all in your own hands. These photographic saloons are better than a whole force of detective police. There's your chance, old man. You'll find her. Do that, and you're all right. Oh, yes—you'll find her, as sure as my name's Jack Randolph."

"No go, Jack," said I. "You see I couldn't recognize her even if I were to see her."

"Couldn't what?"

"Couldn't recognize her."

"You surely would know her if you saw her."

"I don't think I should."

"Well, of all the confounded fixes that ever I met with, this is the greatest!"

"That's the peculiarity of my present situation."

Jack relapsed into smoky silence.

"The fact is," said Jack, after a brief pause, "we've got to go to work systematically. Now, first of all, I want to know what she looks like."

"Well, that's the very thing I don't know."

"Nonsense! You must know something about it. Is she a blonde or a brunette? You can answer that, at least."

"I'm not sure that I can."

"What! don't you know even the color of her complexion?"

"When I saw her, she was as white as a sheet. Even her lips were bloodless. You see, she was frightened out of her wits."

"Well, then, her hair—her hair, man! Was that dark or light?"

"I didn't see it."

"Didn't see it?"

"No. You see it was covered by her hood. Think of that driving sleet. She had to cover herself up as much as she could from the terrible pelting of the storm."

"Well, then, I'll ask only one question more," said Jack, dryly. "I hope you'll be able to answer it. A great deal depends upon it. In fact, upon a true answer to this question the whole thing rests. Gather up all your faculties now, old chap, and try to answer me correctly. No shirking now—no humbug, for I won't stand it. On your life, Macrorie, and, by all your future hopes, answer me this—was your friend—a woman or a man?"

At the beginning of this solemn question, I had roused myself and sat upright, but at its close I slumped myself down in disgust.

"Well," said Jack, "why don't you answer?"

"Jack," said I, severely, "I'm not in the humor for chaff."

"Chaff! my dear fellow, I only want to get a basis of action—a base of operations. Are you sure your friend was a woman? I'm in earnest—really."

"That's all rubbish—of course she was a woman—a lady—young—beautiful—but the anguish which she felt made her face
seem like that of Niobe, or—or—well like some marble statue representing woe or despair, and all that sort of thing. What's the use of humbugging a fellow? Why not talk sense, or at least hold your tongue?"

"Don't row, old boy. You were so utterly in the dark about your friend that I wanted to see how far your knowledge extended. I consider now that a great point is settled, and we have something to start from. Very well. She was really a woman!"

"A lady," said I.
"And a lady," repeated Jack.
"Young?"
"Young."
"And beautiful as an angel," I interposed, enthusiastically.
"And beautiful as an angel," chimed in Jack. "By-the-by, Macrorie, do you think you would know her by her voice?"
"Well, no—no, I don't think I would. You see, she didn't say much, and what she did say was wrung out of her by terror or despair. The tones of that voice might be very different if she were talking about—well, the weather, for instance. The voice of a woman in a storm, and in the face of death, is not exactly the same in tone or modulation as it is when she is quietly speaking the commonplaces of the drawing-room."

"There's an immense amount of truth in that," said Jack, "and I begin to understand and appreciate your position."

"Never, while I live," said I, earnestly, "will I forget the face of that woman as I held her fainting form in my arms, and cheered her, and dragged her back to life; never will I forget the thrilling tones of her voice, as she implored me to leave her and save myself; but yet, as I live, I don't think that I could recognize her face or her voice if I were to encounter her now, under ordinary circumstances, in any drawing-room. Do you understand?"

"Dimly," said Jack; "yes, in fact, I may say thoroughly. You have an uncommonly forcible way of putting it too. I say, Macrorie, you talk just like our chaplain."

"Oh, bother the chaplain!"
"That's the very thing I intend to do before long."
"Well, it'll be the best thing for you. Married and done for, you know."
"Nonsense! I don't mean that. It's something else—the opposite of matrimony."
"What is it?"
"Oh, never mind, I'll let you know when the time comes. It's a little idea of my own to counteract the widow. But come—don't let's wander off. Your business is the thing to be considered now—not mine. Now listen to me."
"Well."
"Let's put your case in a plain, simple, matter-of-fact way. You want to find a person whose name you don't know, whose face you can't recognize, and whose voice even is equally unknown. You can't give any clew to her at all. You don't know whether she lives in Quebec or in New York. You only know she is a woman?"
"A lady," said I.
"Oh, of course—a lady."
"And an English lady," I added. "I could tell that by the tone of her voice."
"She may have been Canadian."
"Yes. Many of the Canadian ladies have the English tone."
"Well, that may be all very true," said Jack, after some moments' thought; "but at the same time it isn't any guide at all. Macrorie, my boy, it's evident that in this instance all the ordinary modes of investigation are no good. Streets, churches,
"Advertising ! ! !"—page 43.
drawing-rooms, photographic saloons, hotel registers, directories, and all that sort of thing are utterly useless. We must try some other plan."

"That's a fact," said I, "but what other plan can be thought of?"

Jack said nothing for some time.

He sat blowing and puffing, and puffing and blowing, apparently bringing all the resources of his intellect to bear upon this great problem. At last he seemed to hit upon an idea.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "I have it. It's the only thing left."

"What's that?"

"Macrorie, my boy," said Jack, with an indescribable solemnity, "I'll tell you what we must do. Let's try—

CHAPTER XIII.

"ADVERTISING!!!"

"ADVERTISING?" said I, dubiously.

"Yes, advertising," repeated Jack. "Try it. Put a notice in all the papers. Begin with the Quebec papers, and then send to Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, London, and all the other towns. After that, send notices to the leading papers of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, St. Louis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Portland, Chicago, Boston, and all the other towns of the United States."

"And while I'm about it," I added, "I may as well insert them in the English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, and Indian journals."

"Oh, bosh!" said Jack, "I'm in earnest. What's the use of nonsense? Really, my dear fellow, why not advertise in the Quebec papers? She'll be sure to see it."

"Well," said I, after some thought, "on the whole it isn't a bad idea. It can't do any harm at any rate."

"Harm? Why, my dear boy, it's your only chance."

"All right, then; let's try advertising."

And saying this, I brought out my entire writing-apparatus and displayed it on the table.

"Will you try your fist at it, Jack?" I asked.

"I? nonsense! I'm no good at writing. It's as much as I can do to write an 'I. O. U.,' though I've had no end of practice. And then, as to my letters—you ought to see them! No, go ahead, old boy. You write, and I'll be critic. That's about the style of thing, I fancy."

At this I sat down and commenced the laborious task of composing an advertisement. In a short time I had written out the following:

"A gentleman who accompanied a lady across the ice on the 3d of April, was separated from her, and since then has been anxious to find out what became of her. Any information will console a distracted breast. The gentleman implores the lady to communicate with him. Address Box 3,333."

I wrote this out, and was so very well satisfied with it, that I read it to Jack. To my surprise and disgust, he burst out into roars of laughter.

"Why, man alive!" he cried, "that will never do. You must never put out that sort of thing, you know. You'll have the whole city in a state of frantic excitement. It's too rubbishy sentimental. No go. Try again, old man, but don't write any more of that sort of thing."

I said nothing. I felt wounded; but I had a dim idea that Jack's criticism was just. It was rather sentimental. So I tried again, and this time I wrote out something very different.
With the following result:

"If the party who crossed the ice on the 3d of April with A. Z. will give her address, she will confer an unspeakable favor. Write to Box No. 3,333."

"Oh, that'll never do at all!" cried Jack, as I read it to him. "In the first place, your 'A. Z.' is too mysterious; and, in the second place, you are still too sentimental with your 'unspeakable favor.' Try again."

I tried again, and wrote the following:

"A gentleman is anxious to learn the address of a party who accompanied him over the ice on the 3d of April. Address Box No. 3,333."

"Oh, that'll never do!" said Jack.

"Why not?"

"Why, man, it's too cold and formal."

"Hang it all! What will suit you? One is too warm; another is too cold."

Saying this, I tried once more, and wrote the following:

"A. B. has been trying in vain to find the address of the party who accompanied him over the ice on the 3d of April. Will she have the kindness to communicate with him to Box No. 3,333?"

"No go," said Jack.

"Why not?"

"Well, you see, you call her a 'party,' and then announce that this 'party' is a woman. It won't do. I wouldn't like to call any lady a 'party.' You'll have to drop that word, old boy."

At this I flung down the pen in despair.

"Well, hang it!" said I. "What will do? You try it, Jack."

"Nonsense!" said he. "I can't write; I can only criticise. Both faculties are very good in their way. You'll have to start from another direction. I'll tell you what to do—try a roundabout way."

"A roundabout way?" I repeated, doubtfully.

"Yes."

"What's that?"

"Why, advertise for—let me see—oh, yes—advertise for the French driver. He was drowned—wasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you advertise for him, she will respond, and thus you will come into contact with her without making a fool of yourself."

"By Jove, Jack," said I, "that's not a bad idea! I think I get your meaning. Of course, if she has any soul, she'll sympathize with the lost driver. But what name shall I put?"

"Was he a common driver? I gathered this from your story."

"Oh, yes. It was a sleigh from the country—hired, you know, not a private sleigh."

"She couldn't have known his name, then?"

"I suppose not. It looked like a sleigh picked up hap-hazard to take her across."

"Well, risk it, and put in an assumed name. Make up something. Any name will do. The lady, I dare say, hasn't the smallest idea of the driver's name. Trot out something—Napoleon Bonaparte Gris, or any thing else you like."

"How would Lavoisier do?"

"Too long."

"Well, Noir, then."

"I don't altogether like that."

"Rollin."

"Literary associations," objected Jack.

"Well, then, Le Verrier," said I, after a moment's thought.

"Le Verrier—" repeated Jack. "Well, leave out the article, and make it plain Verrier. That'll do. It sounds natural."

"Verrier," said I. "And for the Christian name what?"
"Paul," suggested Jack.
"Paul—very well. Paul Verrier—a very good name for a Canadian. All right. I'll insert an advertisement from his distracted parent."

And I wrote out this:
"Notice—Paul Verrier, of Chaudière, left his home on the 3d of April last, to convey a lady to Quebec across the ice. He has not since been heard of. The river broke up on that day, his friends are anxious to know his fate. Any one who can give any information about those who crossed on that date will confer a great favor on his afflicted father. Address Pierre Verrier, Box 3,333."

"That's about the thing," said Jack, after I had read it to him. "That'll fetch her down. Of course, she don't know the name of the habitant that drove her; and, of course, she'll think that this is a notice published by the afflicted father. What then? Why, down she comes to the rescue. Afflicted father suddenly reveals himself in the person of the gallant Macrorie. Grand excitement—mutual explanations—tableau—and the curtain falls to the sound of light and joyous music."

"Bravo, Jack! But I don't like to settle my affairs this way, and leave yours in disorder."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Jack. "There's no immediate danger. I'm settling down into a state of stolid despair, you know. If it wasn't for that last business with Louie, I could be quite calm. That's the only thing that bothers me now."

"I should think the widow would bother you more."

"Well, to tell the truth, she's getting to be a bit of a bore. She's too affectionate and exigeante, and all that, you know. But, then, I always leave early. I dine with her at seven, and get away before nine. Then I go to Louie's—or, at least, that's the way I intend to do."

"You're going to Louie's again, then?"

"Going to Louie's again? Why, man alive, what do you take me for? Going again? I should think I was. Why, Louie's the only comfort I have left on earth."

"But Number Three?"

Jack sighed.

"Poor little thing!" said he. "She seems to be rather down just now. I think she's regretting that she didn't take my offer. But I wrote her a note to-day, telling her to cheer up, and all that."

"But Miss Phillips? What'll you do when she comes? When will she be here?"

"She's expected daily."

"That will rather complicate matters—won't it?"

"Sufficient for the day," said Jack.

"I tell you what it is, my boy. I feel very much struck by Louie's idea about the three oranges. You'll find it precious hard to keep your three affairs in motion. You must drop one or two."

"Come, now, Macrorie—no croaking. You've got me into a placid state of mind by telling me of your little affair. It gave me something to think of besides my own scrapes. So don't you go to work and destroy the good effect that you've produced. For that matter, I won't let you. I'm off, old chap. It's fifteen minutes to three. You'd better seek your balmy couch. No—don't stop me. You'll croak me into despair again. Good-night, old man!"
CHAPTER XIV.

A CONCERT.—A SINGULAR CHARACTER.—“GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.”—A FENIAN.—A GENERAL ROW.—MACRORIE TO THE RESCUE!—MACRORIE’S MAIDEN SPEECH, AND ITS SINGULAR EFFECTIVENESS.—O’HALLORAN.—A STRANGE COMPANION.—INVITED TO PARTICIPATE OF HOSPITALITY.

On the following day I sent my notice to the papers.

On the evening of that day there was to be a concert. Everybody was going. It was under the patronage of the military, and of course everybody had to go. For you must know that, in a garrison-town like Quebec, we of the military order have it all our own way. If we smile on an undertaking, it succeeds. If we don’t, it languishes. If we frown, the only result is ruin. But, as we are generally a good-natured lot, we smile approvingly at almost everything. It gets to be an awful bore; but what can we do? Societies wish our countenance at their public gatherings, and we have to give it. Benevolent associations ask our subscriptions; joint-stock companies wish our names; missionaries and musicians, lawyers and lecturers, printers and preachers, tailors and teachers, orators and oratorios, balls and Bible-meetings, funerals and festivities, churches and concerts—in short, every thing that lives and moves and has its being awaits the military smile. And the smile is smiled. And so, I tell you what it is, my dear fellow, it amounts to this, that the life of an officer isn’t by any means the butterfly existence that you imagine it to be. What with patronizing Tom, Dick, and Harry, inspecting militia, spouting at volunteers, subscribing to charities, buying at bazaars, assisting at concerts, presiding at public dinners, and all that sort of thing no end, it gets to be a pretty difficult matter to keep body and soul together.

The concert under consideration happened to be a popular one. The best of the regimental bands had been kindly lent to assist, and there were songs by amateurs who belonged to the first circles in Quebec, both civil and military. It was quite a medley, and the proceeds were intended for some charitable purpose or other. The house was crowded, and I could not get a seat without extreme difficulty.

The concert went on. They sang “Annie Laurie,” of course. Then followed “La ci darem;” then “D’un Pescator Ignoto;” then “Come gentil;” then “Auld Lang-syne;” then “Ah, mon Fils!” then “Roy’s Wife of Aldivalloch;” then “The Last Rose of Summer;” then “Allister MacAllister;” then “The Harp that once through Tara’s Halls.”

As this last song was being sung, I became aware of an old gentleman near me who seemed to be profoundly affected “The Last Rose of Summer” had evidently touched him, but Tara had an overpowering effect on him. It was sung confoundedly well, too. The band came in with a wild, wailing strain, that was positively heart-breaking. The party just mentioned was, as I said, old, and a gentleman, but he was tall, robust, broad-shouldered, with eagle-like beak, and keen gray eyes that were fitting accompaniments to so distinguished a feature. His dress was rather careless, but his air and the expression of his face evinced a mixture of eccentricity and a sense of superiority. At least, it had evinced this until the singing of Tara. Then he broke down. First he bowed his head down, resting his forehead upon his hands, which were supported by his cane, and several deep-drawn sighs escaped him.
Then he raised his head again, and looked up at the ceiling with an evident effort to assume a careless expression. Then he again hid his face. But the song went on, and the melancholy wail of the accompaniment continued, and at last the old gentleman ceased to struggle, and gave himself up to the influence of that wonderful music. He sat erect and rigid; his hands in front of him clasped tightly round his stick; and his eyes fixed on vacancy; and as I looked at him I saw big tears slowly coursing down his cheeks.

At length the song ceased, and he impatiently dashed his tears away, and looked furtively and suspiciously around, as though trying to see if any one had detected his weakness. I, of course, looked away, so that he had not the smallest reason for supposing that I had seen him.

After this the concert went on through a varied collection of pieces, and all the time I wondered who the old gentleman with the eagle face and tender sensibilities might be. And in this state of wonder I continued until the close.

At last came the usual concluding piece—"God save the Queen."

Of course, as everybody knows, when the national anthem is sung, it is the fashion all over the British empire for the whole audience to rise, and any one who remains seated is guilty of a deliberate insult to the majesty of that empire. On this occasion, as a matter of course, everybody got up, but I was surprised to see that the old gentleman remained seated, with his hands clinched tightly about his cane.

I was not the only one who had noticed this.

The fact is, I had got into a part of the hall which was not altogether congenial to my taste. I had got my ticket at the door, and found that all the reserved seats were taken up. Consequently I had to take my chance among the general public. Now this general public happened to be an awfully loyal public, and the moment they found that a man was among them who deliberately kept his seat while the national anthem was being sung, they began to get into a furious state of excitement.

Let me say also that there was very sufficient reason for this excitement. All Canada was agog about the Fenians. Blood had been shed. An invasion had taken place. There was no joke about it. The Fenians were not an imaginary danger, but a real one. All the newspapers were full of the subject. By the Fenians every Canadian understood an indefinite number of the disbanded veteran soldiers of the late American war, who, having their hand in, were not willing to go back to the monotony of a peaceful life, but preferred rather a career of excitement. Whether this suspicion were well founded or not doesn't make the slightest difference. The effect on the Canadian mind was the same as if it were true. Now, since the Canadian mind was thus roused up to this pitch of universal excitement, there existed a very general watch for Fenian emissaries, and any of that brotherhood who showed himself too openly in certain quarters ran a very serious risk. It was not at all safe to defy popular opinion. And popular opinion ran strongly toward the sentiment of loyalty. And anybody who defied that sentiment of loyalty did it at his peril. A serious peril, too, mind you. A mob won't stand nonsense. It won't listen to reason. It has a weakness for summary vengeance and broken bones.

Now, some such sort of a mob as this began to gather quickly and menacingly round my elderly friend, who had thus so rashly shocked their common senti-
ment. In a few moments a wild uproar began.

"Put him out!"
"Knock him down!"
"Hustle him!"
"He's a Fenian!"
"Down with him!"
"Punch his head!"
"Hold him up, and make him stand up!"
"Stand up, you fool!"
"Get up!"
"Up with him! Let's pass him out over our heads!"
"A Fenian!"
"We'll show him he's in bad company!"
"He's a spy!"
"A Fenian spy!"
"Up with him! Down with him!"
"Pitch into him! Out with him!"
"Toss him! Hustle him! Punch his head! Throttle him! Level him! Give it to him! Turn him inside out! Hold up his boots!"
"Walk him off!"

All these, and about fifty thousand more shouts of a similar character, burst forth from the maddened mob around. All mobs are alike. Any one who has ever seen a mob in a row can understand the action of this particular one. They gathered thick and fast around him. They yelled. They howled. The music of the national anthem was drowned in that wild uproar. They pressed close to him, and the savage eyes that glared on him menaced him with something little less than death itself.

And what did he do?
He?

Why he bore himself splendidly.

As the row began, he rose slowly, holding his stick, which I now saw to be a knotted staff of formidable proportions, and at length reared his figure to its full height. It was a tall and majestic figure which he revealed—thin, yet sinewy, and towering over the heads of the roaring mob around him.

He confronted them all with a dark frown on his brow, and blazing eyes.

"Ye beggars!" he cried. "Come on—the whole pack of ye! A Fenian, ye say? That's thre for you. Ye've got one, an' ye'll find him a tough customer! Come on—the whole thousand of ye!"

And saying this, he swung his big, formidable knotted stick about his head.

Those nearest him started back, but the crowd behind rushed forward. The row increased. The people in the reserved seats in front looked around with anxious eyes, not knowing what was going on.

The crowd yelled and hooted. It surged nearer. A moment more and the tall figure would go down.

Now, I'm a loyal man. None more so. I'm an officer and a gentleman. I'm ready at any moment to lay down my life for the queen and the rest of the royal family. I'm ready to pitch into the Fenians on any proper occasion, and all that.

But somehow this didn't seem to me to be the proper occasion. It was not a Fenian that I saw. It was an elderly gentleman; so sensitive, that but a few minutes before he had been struggling with his tears; so lion-hearted, that now he drew himself up and faced a roaring, howling mob of enemies—calmly, unflinchingly—hurling desperate defiance at them. And was that the sort of thing that I could stand? What! to see one man attacked by hundreds—a man like that, too—an old man, alone, with nothing to sustain him but his own invincible pluck? Pooh! what's the use of talking? I am an officer and a gentleman, and as such it would have been
a foul disgrace to me if I had been capable of standing there quietly and looking at the old man at the mercies of the mob.

But, as it happened, I did nothing of the kind.

On the contrary, I sprang forward and stood by the side of the old man.

"Now, look here—you fellows!" I roared—"this is all very fine, and very loyal, but, damn it! don't it strike you that it's an infernally cowardly thing to pitch into an old man in this style? He may be a Fenian, and he may be Old Nick himself, but he's never done you fellows any harm. What the devil do you mean by kicking up such a row as this? You touch him, if you dare, that's all! You see my uniform, and you know what I am. I'm a Bohtail. This man is my friend. He's going out with me, and I'd like to see the fellow that will stop us."

That's the first speech I ever made in my life, and all that I can say is, that it was wonderfully successful. Demosthenes, and Cicero, and the Earl of Chatham, and Burke, and Mirabeau, all rolled into one, couldn't have been more successful. The mob rolled back. They looked ashamed. It was a word of sense spoken in a forcible manner. And that I take it is the essence of true oratory.

The mob rolled back. I gave my new friend my arm. He took it. The door was not far away. We started to go out. The people fell back, and made way for us. After all, they were a good-enough lot, and had only yielded to a kind of panic. All mobs, I suppose, are insane. The very fact of a mob involves a kind of temporary insanity. But these fellows had come to their senses, and so I had no difficulty in making my way through them along with my companion. We got out into the street without any difficulty. My new friend held my arm, and involuntarily made a turn to the right on leaving the door of the hall. Thus we walked along, and for some time we walked in silence.

At length the silence was broken by my companion.

"Well—well—well!" he ejaculated—

"to think of me, walking with a British officer—arrum-in-arrum!"

"Why not?" said I.

"Why not?" said he, "why there's iviry reason in loife. I'm a Fenian."

"Pooh!" said I, "what's the use of bothering about politics? You're a man, and a confoundedly plucky fellow too. Do you think that I could stand there and see those asses pitching into you? Don't bother about politics."

"An' I won't" said he. "But at any reet, I feeched them. An Oirishman niver sirrinders to an inimy. I feeched them, I did—an' I expressed meself in shootable sintiments."

The rich Leinster accent of my companion showed his nationality more plainly than even his own explicit statement. But this did not at all lessen the interest that I took in him. His sensitiveness which had been so conspicuous, his courage which had shone so brightly, and his impressive features, all combined to create a feeling of mingled regard and respect for my new acquaintance.

"By Jove!" I cried, "I never saw a pluckier fellow in my life. There you were, alone, with a mad mob howling at you."

"It's meself," said he, "that'll nivir be intimideeted. Don't I know what a mob is? An' if I didn't, wouldn't I fece them all the seeme? An' aft're all I don't moind tellin' you that it wasn't disrispect. It was only a kind of abstraction, an' I wasn't conscious that it was the national anthem, so I wasn't. I'd have stood up, if I'd
known it. But whin those devils began reelin' at me, I had to trait them with scarrun and contumpt. An' for me—I haven't much toime to live, but what I have ye've seved for me."

"Oh, nonsense, don't talk about that," said I, modestly.

"Sorr," said he, "I'm very well aware that I'm under deep obleegetions, an' I owe ye a debt of grateechood. Conso- quinty, I insist on bein' greetful. I hold iviry British officer as me personal inimy; but, in you, sorr, I'm sensible of a gininous frind. Ye've seved me loife, so ye have, an' there's no doubt about it. We'll weve politics. I won't spake of the Finians. Phaylim O'Halloran isn't the man that'll mition onseasonable politics, or dwell upon uncongainal thames, so he isn't."

"Well," said I, "Mr. O'Halloran, since you've introduced yourself, I must give you my humble address. I'm Lieutenant Macrorie."

"Macrorie?" said he.

"Macrorie," said I, "of the Bobtails, and I assure you I'm very happy to make your acquaintance."

We walked along arm-in-arm in the most friendly manner, chatting about things in general. I found my companion to be very intelligent and very well informed. He had travelled much. He expressed himself fluently on every subject, and though his brogue was conspicuous, he was evidently a gentleman, and very well educated too. I gathered from his conversation that he had studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and that he had been leading a desultory sort of life in the United States for twenty years or so. He had been in Canada for something less than a year, and was anxious to get back to a more southern clime.

Chatting thus, and arm-in-arm, we walked along. I had nothing to do, and so I went with my new-found friend, with a vague idea of seeing him safe home. Of course such an idea was preposterous, for he could have got home just as well without me, but I had taken a fancy to my new acquaintance, and found a strange charm in his conversa- tion. He talked incessantly and on many subjects. He discoursed on theology, litera- ture, science, the weather, the army, the navy, music, painting, sculpture, photogra- phy, engraving, geology, chemistry, and on a thousand other arts and sciences, in all of which he showed himself deeply versed, and far beyond my depth. He had a brogue, and I had none, but as for intellec- tual attainments I was only a child in comparison with him.

At length we reached a house where he stopped.

"I'm inseeenetly obloged to ye," said he. "And now, won't ye koindly condiscind to step in and parteeok of me hospiti- talitee? I'll give me shuprame delight."

After such an invitation what could I say? I had nothing to do. Accordingly, I accepted it in a proper spirit, and, thanking him for his kind invitation, I went in along with him.

O'Halloran led the way in. It was a comfortable house. The parlor which we entered was large, and a huge grate filled with blazing coals diffused a cheerful glow. Magazines and periodicals lay on the table. Pictures illustrative of classical scenes hung round the walls, done in the old-fashioned style of line engraving, and representing such subjects as Mutius Scenola before Porsona; Belisarius begging for an obo- lus; Αeneas carrying his father from Troy; Leondias at Thermopylae; Coriolanus quit- ting Rome; Hamilcar making the boy Han- nibal swear his oath of hate against Rome; and others of a similar character. O'Hal- loran made me sit in a "sleepy-hollow"
"Leedies," said O'Halloran, 'allow me to introjuce to ye Captain Macrorie."—page 61.
easy-chair by the fire. Beside me were two huge book-shelves crammed with books. A glance at them showed me that they were largely of a classical order. Longinus, Aeschylus, Demosthenes, Dindorf, Plato, Stallbaum—such were the names that I saw in gilt letters on the backs of the volumes.

About the room there was that air of mingled comfort and refinement that is always suggestive of the presence of ladies. A work-basket stood beside the table. And on a little Chinese table in a corner lay some crochet-work. I took in all these things at a glance and while my host was talking to me. After a time he excused himself and said that he would call the "leedies." He retired, leaving me alone, and striving to picture to myself—

CHAPTER XV.

THE O‘HALLORAN LADIES.—THEIR APPEARANCE.—THEIR AGES.—THEIR DRESS.—THEIR DEMEANOR.—THEIR CULTURE, POLISH, EDUCATION, RANK, STYLE, ATTAINMENTS, AND ALL ABOUT THEM:

"Leedies," said O‘Halloran, "allow me to introjuice to ye Captain Macrorie, an officer an' a gentlemín, an' when I steeet that he seeved me life about a half an hour ago, ye'll see what sintimints of gratechood are his jew."

With these words O‘Halloran entered the room, followed by two ladies whom he thus introduced, giving my name to them, but in the abstraction of the moment not mentioning their names to me.

The ladies greeted me with smiles, which at once threw a new charm over this very comfortable room, and seated themselves opposite on the other side of the fire, so that I had the best view of them possible.

And now the very first glance that I obtained of these ladies showed me that I had hit upon a wonderful piece of good luck when I went to that concert and met my new friend O‘Halloran. For in beauty of face, grace of figure, refinement of manner; in everything that affects an impressible man—and what man is not impressible?—these ladies were so far beyond all others in Quebec, that no comparison could be made. The Burton girls were nowhere.

The elder of the two might have been—no matter—not over twenty-three or four at any rate; while the younger was certainly not over eighteen or nineteen. There was a good deal of similarity in their styles; both were brunettes; both had abundance of dark, lustrous hair; both had those dark, hazel eyes which can send such a thrill to the soul of the impressible. For my part I thrilled, I glowed, I exulted, I rejoiced and triumphed in the adventure which had led to such a discovery as this. Were there any other women in Canada, in America, or in the world, equal to them? I did not believe there were. And then their voices—low—sweet—musical—voices which spoke of the exquisite refinement of perfect breeding; those voices would have been enough to make a man do or dare any thing.

Between them, however, there were some differences. The elder had an expression of good-natured content, and there was in her a vein of fun which was manifest, while the younger seemed to have a nature which was more intense and more earnest, and there was around her a certain indefinable reserve and hauteur.

Which did I admire most?

I declare it's simply impossible to say, I was overwhelmed. I was crushed with equal admiration. My whole soul became instinct with the immortal sentiment—
"How happy could I be with either;" while the cordiality of my reception, which made me at once a friend of this jewel of a family, caused my situation to assume so delicious an aspect that it was positively bewildering.

O’Halloran hadn’t mentioned their names, but the names soon came out. They were evidently his daughters. The name of the eldest I found was Nora, and the name of the younger was Marion. The old gentleman was lively, and gave a highly-dramatic account of the affair at the concert, in which he represented my conduct in the most glowing light. The ladies listened to all this with undisguised agitation, interrupting him frequently with anxious questions, and regarding my humble self as a sort of a hero. All this was in the highest degree encouraging to a susceptible mind; and I soon found myself sliding off into an easy, a frank, an eloquent, and a very delightful conversation. Of the two ladies, the eldest Miss O’Halloran took the chief share in that lively yet intellectual intercourse. Marion only put in a word occasionally; and, though very amiable, still did not show so much cordiality as her sister. But Miss O’Halloran! what wit! what sparkle! what mirth! what fun! what repartee! what culture! what refinement! what an acquaintance with the world! what a knowledge of men and things! what a faultless accent! what indescribable grace of manner! what a generous and yet lady-like humor! what a merry, musical laugh! what quickness of apprehension! what acuteness of perception! what—words fail. Imagine every thing that is delightful in a first-rate conversationalist, and every thing that is fascinating in a lady, and even then you will fail to have a correct idea of Miss O’Halloran. To have such an idea it would be necessary to see her.

Marion on the other hand was quiet, as I have said. Perhaps this arose from a reticence of disposition; or perhaps it was merely the result of her position as a younger sister. Her beautiful face, with its calm, self-poised expression, was turned toward us, and she listened to all that was said, and at times a smile like a sunbeam would flash over her lovely features; but it was only at times, when a direct appeal was made to her, that she would speak, and then her words were few, though quite to the point. I had not, therefore, a fair chance of comparing her with Miss O’Halloran.

In their accent there was not the slightest sign of that rich Leinster brogue which was so apparent in their father. This, however, may have arisen from an English mother, or an English education. Suffice it to say that in no respect could they be distinguished from English ladies, except in a certain vivacity of manner, which in the latter is not common. O’Halloran was evidently a gentleman, and his house showed that he was at least in comfortable circumstances. What his business now might be I could not tell. What his past had been was equally uncertain. Was he an exiled Young Ireland? Had he been driven from his home, or had he left it voluntarily? Whatever he was, his surroundings and his belongings showed unmistakable signs of culture and refinement; and as to his daughters, why, hang it! a peer of the realm couldn’t have shown more glorious specimens of perfect womanhood than these which smiled on me in that pleasant parlor.

Meanwhile, as I flung myself headlong into a lively conversation with Miss O’Halloran, the old gentleman listened for a time and made occasional remarks, but at length relapsed into himself, and after some min-
...of thought he reached out his hand and drew from among the periodicals lying on the table—

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DAILY PAPER.

"By the powers!" suddenly interrupted the deep voice of O'Halloran, breaking in upon our lively and delightful conversation.

At which we all started as though we had been shot.

"By the pipers!" continued O'Halloran, after some hesitation. "To think of anybody tryin' to cross the river on the 3d! Why, that was the dee of the break-up."

At these words I started in new astonishment, and for a moment didn't know what in the world to make of it all. As for the ladies, they didn't say a word. I didn't notice them, in fact; I had turned and was looking at O'Halloran.

"See here," said he. "Did you ever hear the loikes of this? 'Paul Verrier of Chaudière lift his home on the 3d of Eoprill last, to conceve a leedy to Quebec across the oice,'" and he read straight through the very advertisement which I had written and inserted in that very paper.

What my emotions were at that moment it is difficult to describe. At first I felt surprise, then I experienced a sense of triumph at this striking proof of the success which my advertisement had met with, but finally I had occasion to feel emotions which were very different from either of these. I had turned as O'Halloran began to read those familiar words, and after he had finished I mechanically settled myself into my former position, partly because of the comfort of the thing, and partly to see how perfectly impartial hearers like these ladies would listen to this composition of mine. My chief feeling was precisely the same as animates the artist who stands incognito beside his picture, to listen to the remarks of spectators; or the author who hunts through papers to read the criticism on his first book. This, it is true, was neither a picture nor a book, nor was I either an artist or an author; yet, after all, this advertisement was a literary effort of mine, and, what is more, it was the first one that had appeared in print. Was it any wonder, then, that for these reasons I felt curious to see the effect of that advertisement?

Now, as I turned, I was in expectation of some sign of feeling on the part of the ladies—call it surprise; call it sympathy; call it what you will—but I certainly was not prepared for that very peculiar and very marked effect which my humble effort at composition produced on them.

For there they sat—Marion erect and rigid, with her eyes fixed on her sister, and her hand raised in an attitude of warning; and Miss O'Halloran, in the same fixed attitude, looked eagerly at Marion, her eyes wide open, her lips parted, and one of her hands also half raised in the involuntary expression of amazement, or the mechanical suggestion of secrecy. Miss O'Halloran's emotion was not so strong as that of Marion, but then her nature was more placid, and the attitude of each was in full accordance with their respective characters.

They sat there in that attitude, altogether unconscious of me and of my gaze, with deep emotion visible on their faces, and unmistakable, yet why that emotion should be caused by that advertisement I could not for the life of me imagine.

"Well," said O'Halloran, "what do ye think of that now? Isn't that a speclmn of thre Canajin grade? The man threw his loife away for a few pince."

As O'Halloran spoke, the ladies recovered
able to my design, and, seeing such immediate success, I went on headlong.

“You see,” said I, “I put that notice in myself.”

“You!” cried Miss O’Halloran,

“O’Halloran,” Miss O’Halloran,

Marion,

this time in greater surprise than before.

“Yes,” said I. “I did it because I was very anxious to trace some one, and this appeared to be the way that was at once the most certain, and at the same time the least likely to excite suspicion.”

“Suspicion?”

“Yes—for the one whom I wished to trace was a lady.”

“A lady!” said O’Halloran. “Aha! you rogue, so that’s what ye’er up to, is it? An’ there isn’t a word of truth in this about Verrier?”

“Yes, there is,” said I. “He was really drowned, but I don’t know his name, and Paul Verrier, and the disconsolate father, Pierre, are altogether imaginary names. But I’ll tell you all about it.”

“Be dad, an’ I’d be glad if ye would, for this exorjium stirs me as the most schumpidious bit of schamin that I’ve encountered for a month of Sundays.”

While I was saying this, the ladies did not utter a single syllable. But if they were silent, it was not from want of interest. Their eyes were fixed on mine as though they were bound to me by some powerful spell; their lips parted, and, in their intense eagerness to hear what it was that I had to say, they did not pretend to conceal their feelings. Miss O’Halloran was seated in an arm-chair. Her left arm leaned upon it, and her hand mechanically pressed her forehead as she devoured me with her gaze. Marion was seated on a common chair, and sat with one elbow on the table, her hands clasped tight, her body

their presence of mind. They started. Miss O’Halloran saw my eyes fixed on her, flushed up a little, and looked away. As for Marion, she too saw my look, but, instead of turning her eyes away, she fixed them on me for an instant with a strange and most intense gaze, which seemed to spring from her dark, solemn, lustrous eyes, and pierce me through and through. But it was only for an instant. Then her eyes fell, and there remained not a trace of their past excitement in either of them.

I confess I was utterly confounded at this. These two ladies perceived in that advertisement of mine a certain meaning which showed that they must have some idea of the cause of the fate of the imaginary Verrier. And what was this that they knew; and how much did they know? Was it possible that they could know the lady herself? It seemed probable.

The idea filled me with intense excitement, and made me determine here on the spot, and at once, to pursue my search after the unknown lady. But how? One way alone seemed possible, and that was by telling a simple, unvarnished tale of my own actual adventure.

This decision I reached in little more than a minute, and, before either of the ladies had made a reply to O’Halloran’s last remark, I answered him in as easy a tone as I could assume.

“Oh,” I said, “I can tell you all about that.”

“You!” cried O’Halloran.

“You!” cried Miss O’Halloran.

“You!” cried Marion, and she and her sister fixed their eyes upon me with unmistakable excitement, and seemed to anticipate all that I might be going to say.

This, of course, was all the more favor-
thrown slightly forward, and her eyes fixed
on mine with an intensity of gaze that was
really embarrassing.

And now all this convinced me that they
must know all about it, and emboldened
me to go on. Now was the time, I felt, to
press my search—now or never.

So I went on—

"Conticiere omnes, intentique ora tenebant
Inde toto Sandy Macrorie sic oras ab alto:
Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem."

That's about it. Rather a hackneyed
quotation, of course, but a fellow like me
isn't supposed to know much about Latin,
and it is uncommonly appropriate. And, I
tell you what it is, since Æneas entertained
Dido on that memorable occasion, few fel-
loves have had such an audience as that
which gathered round me, as I sat in that
hospitalite parlor, and told about my adven-
ture on the ice.

Such an audience was enough to stimu-
late any man. I felt the stimulus. I'm
not generally considered fluent, or good at
description, and I'm not much of a talker;
but all that I ever lacked on ordinary oc-
casions I made amends for on that evening.
I began at the beginning, from the time I
was ordered off. Then I led my spellbound
audience over the crumbling ice, till the
sleigh came. Then I indulged in a thrill-
ing description of the runaway horse and
the lost driver. Then I portrayed the lady
floating in a sleigh, and my rescue of her.
Of course, for manifest reasons, which every
gentleman will appreciate, I didn't bring
myself forward more prominently than I
could help. Then followed that journey
over the ice, the passage of the ice-ridge,
the long, interminable march, the fainting
lady, the broad channel near the shore,
the white gleam of the ice-cone at Mont-
morency, my wild leap, and my mad
dash up the bank to the Frenchman's
house.

Up to this moment my audience sat, as I
have before remarked, I think, simply spell-
bound. O'Halloran was on one side of
me, with his chin on his breast, and his
eyes glaring at me from beneath his bushy
eyebrows. Marion sat rigid and motion-
less, with her hands clasped, and her eyes
fixed on the floor. Miss O'Halloran never
took her eyes off my face, but kept them
on mine as though they were riveted there.
At times she started nervously, and shifted
her position, and fidgeted in her chair, but
never did she remove her eyes. Once,
when I came to the time when I led my
companion over the ice-ridge, I saw a shud-
der pass through her. Once again, when I
came to that moment when my companion
fainted, Marion gave a kind of gasp, and I
saw Miss O'Halloran reach out her hand,
and clasp the clinched hands of her sister;
but with these exceptions there was no
variation in their attitude or manner.

And now I tuned my harp to a lighter
strain, which means that I proceeded to
give an account of my journey after the
doctor, his start, my slumber, my own
start, our meeting, the doctor's wrath, my
pursuasions, our journey, our troubles, our
arrival at the house, our final crushing dis-
appointment, the doctor's brutal raillery,
my own meekness, and our final return
home. Then, without mentioning Jack
Randolph, I explained the object of the
advertisement—

"Sic Sandy Macrorie, intentis omnibus, unus
Fata renarrat Divum, cursusque docebat,
Conticiant tandem—"

[Hack Latin, of course, but then, you
know, if one does quote Latin, that is the
only sort that can be understood by the
general reader.]
The conclusion of my story produced a marked effect. O'Halloran roused himself, and sat erect with a smile on his face and a good-natured twinkle in his eyes. Miss O'Halloran lowered her eyes and held down her head, and once, when I reached that point in my story where the bird was flown, she absolutely laughed out. Marion's solemn and beautiful face also underwent a change. A softer expression came over it; she raised her eyes and fixed them with burning intensity on mine, her hands relaxed the rigid clasp with which they had held one another, and she settled herself into an easier position in her chair.

"Well, be jakers!" exclaimed old Halloran when I had concluded, "it bates the wurruld. What a lucky dog ye are! Adventures come tumblin' upon ye dee afther 'dee. But will ye ivir foind the leedee?"

I shook my head.

"I'm afraid not," said I, disconsolately. "I put out that advertisement with a faint hope that the lady's sympathy with the unfortunate driver might lead her to make herself known."

At this point the ladies rose. It was getting late, and they bade adieu and retired. Marion went out rather abruptly, Miss O'Halloran rather slowly, and not without a final smile of bewitching sweetness. I was going too, but O'Halloran would not think of it. He declared that the evening was just begun. Now that the ladies were gone we would have the field to ourselves. He assured me that I had nothing in particular to do, and might easily wait and join him in "somethin' warrum."

CHAPTER XVII.

"SOMETHIN' WARRUM."

I must say I was grievously disappointed at the departure of the ladies. It was late enough in all conscience for such a move, but the time had passed quickly, and I was not aware how late it was. Besides, I had hoped that something would fall from them which would throw light on the great mystery. But nothing of the kind occurred. They retired without saying anything more than the commonplaces of social life. What made it worse was, the fact that my story had produced a tremendous effect on both of them. That could not be concealed. They evidently knew something about the lady whom I had rescued; and, if they chose, they could put me in the way of discovery. Then, in Heaven's name, why didn't they? Why did they go off in this style, without a word, leaving me a prey to suspense of the worst kind? It was cruel. It was unkind. It was ungenerous. It was unjust. It was unfair.

One thing alone remained to comfort and encourage me, and that was the recollection of Miss O'Halloran's bewitching smile. The sweetness of that smile lingered in my memory, and seemed to give me hope. I would see her again. I would ask her directly, and she would not have the heart to refuse. Marion's graver face did not inspire that confident hope which was caused by the more genial and sympathetic manner of her sprightly elder sister.

Such were my thoughts after the ladies had taken their departure. But these thoughts were soon interrupted and diverted to another channel. O'Halloran rang for a servant, and ordered up what he called "somethin' warrum." That something soon appeared in the shape of two decanters, a kettle of hot water, a sugar-bowl, tumblers, wine-glasses, spoons, and several other things, the list of which was closed by pipes and tobacco.

O'Halloran was beyond a doubt an Irishman, and a patriotic one at that, but for
“somethin’ warrum” he evidently preferred Scotch whiskey to that which is produced on the Emerald Sod. Beneath the benign influences of this draught he became more confidential, and I grew more serene. We sat. We quaffed the fragrant draught. We inhaled the cheerful nicotic fumes. We became friendly, communicative, sympathetic.

O’Halloran, however, was more talkative than I, and consequently had more to say. If I’m not a good talker, I’m at least an excellent listener, and that was all that my new friend wanted. And so he went on talking, quite indifferent as to any answers of mine; and, as I always prefer the ease of listening to the drudgery of talking, we were both well satisfied and mutually delighted.

First of all, O’Halloran was simply festive. He talked much about my adventure, criticised it from various points of view, and gayly rallied me about the lost “gyerrul.”

From a consideration of my circumstances, he wandered gradually away to his own. He lamented his present position in Quebec, which place he found insufferably dull.

“I’d lave it at wanst,” he said, “if I weren’t detoened here by the cleems of jeyty. But I foid it dull beyond all expression. Me only occupation is to walk about the shrathres and throy to preserve the attichood of a shuparior baying. But I’m getting overwarrun an’ toired out, an’ I’m longing for the toime whin I can bid ajoo to the country with its Injins an’ Canajians.”

“I don’t see what you can find to amuse yourself with,” said I, sympathetically.

“Oh,” said he, “I have veerious purshoots. I’ve got me books, an’ I foid imploymint an’ amusemint with thim.”

And now he began to enlarge on the theme of his books, and he went on in this way till he became eloquent, enthusiastic, and glorious. He quaffed the limpid and transparent liquid, and its insinuating influences inspired him every moment to nobler flights of fancy, of rhetoric, and of eloquence. He began to grow learned. He discoursed about the Attic drama; the campaigns of Hannibal; the manners and customs of the Parthians; the doctrines of Zoroaster; the wars of Heraclius and Chosroes; the Omniaides, the Abbasides, and the Fatimites; the Comneni; the Paleologi; the writings of Snorro Sturlesson; the round towers of Ireland; the Phoenician origin of the Irish people proved by illustrations from Plautus, and a hundred other things of a similar character.

“And what are you engaged upon now?” I asked, at length, as I found myself fairly lost amid the multiplicity of subjects which he brought forward.

“Engaged upon?” he exclaimed, “well—a little of iviry thing, but this dee I’ve been busy with a rayconstruction of the scholastic theories rilitiv’ to the jureetion of the diluge of Juecelson. Have ye ivir perused the thratisses of the Chubingen school about the Noachic diluge?”

“No.”

“Well, ye’ll find it moighty foine an’ instructive raidin’. But in addition to this, I’ve been investigatin’ the subject of maydyayvil jools.”

“Jools?” I repeated, in an imbecile way.

“Yis, jools,” said O’Halloran, “the orjil, ye know, the weeger of battle.”

“Oh, yea,” said I, as a light burst in upon me; “duels—I understand.”

“But the chafe subject that I’m engaged upon is a very different one,” he resumed, taking another swallow of the oft-replenished draught. “It’s a thratise of moine by which I Ixplet to upsit the theories of the miserable SAXON schaymers that desthoirt the pleen facts of antiquete to shoot their
own narrow an' disthorted comphrehensions. An' I till ye what—whin my thraitise is published, it'll make a chumult among thim that'll convulse the literary wurruld."

"What is your treatise about?" I asked, dreamily, for I only half comprehended him, or rather, I didn't comprehend him at all.

"Oh," said he, "its a foine subject intoirely. It's a thraitise rilitiv' to the Aydipodayan Ipopaya."

"What's that?" I asked. "The what?—"

"The Aydipodayan Ipopaya," said O'Halloran.

"The Aydipodayan Ipopaya?‖ I repeated, in a misty, fogy, and utterly woe-be-gone manner.

"Yis," said he, "an' I'd like to have your opinion about that same," saying which, he once more filled his oft-replenished tumbler.

It was too much. The conversation was getting beyond my depth. I had followed him in a vague and misty way thus far, but this Aydipodayan Ipopaya was an obstacle which I could not in any way surmount. I halted short, full in front of that insurmountable obstacle. So far from surmounting it, I couldn't even pretend to have the smallest idea what it was. I could not get over it, and therefore began to think of a general retreat.

I rose to my feet.

"Ye're not going yit?" he said.

"Yes, but I am," said I.

"Why, sure it's airly enough," said he.

"Yes," said I, "it's early enough, but it's early the wrong way. It's now," said I, taking out my watch, "just twenty minutes of four. I must be off—really."

"Well," said O'Halloran, "I'm sorry ye're going, but you know best what you must do."

"And I'm sorrier," said I, "for I've spent a most delightful evening."

"Sure an' I'm glad to hear ye say that. And ye'll come again, won't ye?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"Come to-morrow night thin," said he.

"I shall be only too happy," said I; and with these words I took my departure.

I went home, and went to bed at once. But I lay awake, a prey to many thoughts. Those thoughts did not refer to O'Halloran, or to his Aydipodayan Ipopaya. On the contrary, they referred altogether to the ladies, and to the manner in which they had heard my narrative.

What was the meaning of that?

And my speculations on this passed on even into my dreams, and thus carried me away into

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING.—APPEARANCE OF JACK RANDOLPH.—A NEW COMPLICATION.—THE THREE ORANGES.—DESERATE EFFORTS OF THE JUGGLER.—HOW TO MAKE FULL, AMPLE, COMPLETE, AND MOST SATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS.—MISS PHILLIPS!—THE WIDOW!—NUMBER THREE!!--LOUIE RAPIDLY RISING INTO GREATER PROMINENCE ON THE MENTAL AND SENTIMENTAL HORIZON OF JACK RANDOLPH.

"Well, old chap," cried Jack, as he burst into my room on the following morning, "what the mischief were you doing with yourself all last night? Come, out with it. No humbug. I was here at twelve, lighted up, and smoked till—yes—I'll be hanged if it wasn't half-past two. And you didn't come. What do you mean, my good fellow, by that sort of thing?"
"Oh," said I, meekly, "I was passing the evening with a friend."

"The evening! The night you mean."

'Well, it was rather late," said I. "The fact is, we got talking, and I was telling him about my adventure on the ice. We had been at the concert first, and then I went with him to his quarters. By-the-way, why weren't you there?"

In this dexterous way I parried Jack's question, for I did not feel inclined just yet to return his confidence. I am by nature, as the reader must by this time have seen, uncommonly reticent and reserved, and I wasn't going to pour out my story and my feelings to Jack, who would probably go and tell it everywhere before the close of the day.

"The concert!" cried Jack, contemptuously—"the concert! My dear boy, are you mad? What's a concert to me or I to a concert? A concert? My dear fellow, what kind of an idea have you formed of me, if you think that I am capable of taking part in any festive scene when my soul is crushed under such an accumulated burden of fuss and bother?"

"What, are you bothered still? Haven't you begun to see your way through the woods?"

"See my way?" cried Jack. "Why, it's getting worse and worse—"

"Worse? I thought you had reached the worst when you were repulsed by Louie. What worse thing can happen than that? Weren't all your thoughts on death intent? Didn't you repeat your order for a gravestone?"

"True, old boy; very correct; but then I was just beginning to rally, you know, and all that, when down comes a new bother, and, if I weren't so uncommonly fruitful in resource, this day would have seen an end of Jack Randolph. I see you're rather inclined to chaff me about the gravestone, but I tell you what it is, Macrorie, if this sort of thing continues you'll be in for it. I've pulled through this day, but whether I can pull through to-morrow or not is a very hard thing to say."

At this Jack struck a match, and solemnly lighted his pipe, which all this time he had been filling.

"'Pon my word, old chap," said I, "you seem bothered again, and cornered, and all that. What's up? Any thing new? Out with it, and pour it into this sympathetic ear."

Jack gave about a dozen solemn puffs. Then he removed his pipe with his left hand. Then with his right hand he stroked his brow. Then he said, slowly and impressively:

"She's here!"


"Miss Phillips!" said Jack.

"Miss Phillips!" I cried. "Miss Phillips! Why, haven't you been expecting her? Didn't she write, and tell you that she was coming, and all that?"

"Yes; but then you know I had half an idea that something or other would turn up to prevent her actual arrival. There's many a slip, you know, 'tween cup and lip. How did I know that she was really coming? It didn't seem at all probable that any thing so abominably embarrassing should be added to all my other embarrassments."

"Probable? Why, my dear fellow, it seems to me the most probable thing in the world. It's always so. Misfortunes never come single. Don't you know that they always come in clusters? But come, tell me all about it. In the first place, you've seen her, of course?"

"Oh, of course. I heard of her arrival
yesterday morn, and went off at once to call on her. Her reception of me was not very flattering. She was, in fact, most con
foundedly cool. But you know my way. I felt awfully cut up, and insisted on knowing the reason of all this. Then it all came out."

Jack paused.

"Well, what was it?"

"Why, confound it, it seems that she had been here two days, and had been expecting me to come every moment. Now, I ask you, Macrorie, as a friend, wasn't that rather hard on a fellow whom he's trying to do the very best he can, and is over head and ears in all kinds of difficulties? You know," he continued, more earnestly, "the awful bothers I've had the last few days. Why, man alive, I had only just got her letter, and hadn't recovered from the shock of that. And now, while I was still in a state of bewilderment at such unexpected news, here she comes herself! And then she begins to pitch into me for not calling on her before."

"It was rather hard, I must confess," said I, with my never-failing sympathy; "and how did it all end?"

Jack heaved a heavy—a very heavy—sigh.

"Well," said he, "it ended all right— for the time. I declared that I had not expected her until the following week; and, when she referred to certain passages in her letter, I told her that I had misunder
stood her altogether, which was the solemn fact, for I swear, Macrorie, I really didn't think, even if she did come, that she'd be here two or three days after her letter came. Two or three days—why, hang it all, she must have arrived here the very day I got her letter. The letter must have come through by land, and she came by the way of Portland. Confound those abominable mails, I say! What business have those wretched postmasters to send their letters through the woods and snow? Well, never mind. I made it up all right."

"All right?"

"Oh, yes. I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing in the completest way. In fact, I made a full, ample, intelligible, and perfectly satisfactory explanation of the whole thing. I showed that it was all a mistake, you know—that I was hum-bugged by the mails, and all that sort of thing, you know. So she relented, and we made it all up, and I took her out driving, and we had a glorious time, though the roads were awful—perfect lakes, slush no end, universal thaw, and all that. But we did the drive, and I promised to go there again to-day."

"And did you call on the widow?"

"Oh, yes; but before I went there I had to write a letter to Number Three."

"Number Three! You must have had your hands full?"

"Hands full? I should think I had, my boy. You know what agony writing a let
ter is to me. It took me two hours to get through it. You see I had written her be
fore, reproaching her for not running off with me, and she had answered me. I got her answer yesterday morning. She wrote back a repetition of her reason for not going, and pleaded her father, who she said would go mad if she did such a thing. Be
 tween you and me, Macrorie, that's all bosh. The man's as mad as a March hare now. But this wasn't all. What do you think? She actually undertook to haul me over the coals about the widow."

"What! has she heard about it?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't I tell you before that she kept the run of me pretty closely? Well, she's evidently heard all about me and the widow, and accordingly, after a
broad explanation about her father, she proceeded to walk into me about the widow. Now that was another shock. You see, the fact is, I pitched into her first for this very reason, and thought, if I began the attack, she'd have to take up a strictly defensive attitude. But she was too many guns for me. No go, my boy. Not with Number Three. She dodged my blow, and then sprang at me herself, and I found myself thrown on my defence. So you see I had to write to her at once."

Jack sighed heavily, and quaffed some Bass.

"But how the mischief could you handle such a subject? Two hours! I should think so. For my part, I don't see how you managed it at all."

"Oh, I got through," said Jack. "I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing in the completest way. In fact, I made a full, perfect, intelligible, ample, and satisfactory explanation—"

"Oh, that's all downright bosh now, old boy," I interrupted. "How could you explain it? It can't be explained."

"But I did think," said Jack. "I don't remember how. I only know the letter struck me as just the thing, and I dropped it into the post-office when on my way to the widow's."

"The widow's?"

"Yes, as soon as I finished the letter, I hurried off to the widow's."

"By Jove!" I cried, aghast. "So that's the style of thing, is it? Look here, old man, will you allow me to ask you, in the mildest manner in the world, how long you consider yourself able to keep up this sort of thing?"

"Allow you? Certainly not. No questions, old chap. I don't question myself, and I'll be hanged if I'll let anybody else, I'm among the breakers. I'm whirling down-stream. I have a strong sense of the aptness of Louie's idea about the juggler and the oranges. But the worst of it is, I'm beginning to lose confidence in myself."

And Jack leaned his head back, and sent out a long beam of smoke that flew straight up and hit the ceiling. After which he stared at me in unutterable solemnity.

"Well," said I, "go on. What about the widow?"

"The widow—oh—when I got there I found another row."

"Another?"

"Yes, another—the worst of all. But by this time I had grown used to it, and I was as serene as a mountain-lake."

"But—the row—what was it about?"

"Oh, she had heard about my engagement to Miss Phillips, and her arrival; so she at once began to talk to me like a father. The way she questioned me—why the Grand Inquisitor is nothing to it. But she didn't make any thing by it. You see I took up the Fabian tactics and avoided a direct engagement."

"How's that?"

"Why, I wouldn't answer her."

"How could you avoid it?"

"Pooh!—easy enough—I sat and chaffed her, and laughed at her, and called her jealous, and twitted her, no end. Well, you know, at last she got laughing herself, and we made it all up, and all that sort of thing, you know; still, she's very pertinacious, and even after we made up she teased and teased, till she got an explanation out of me."

"An explanation! What, another?"

"Oh, yes—easy enough—I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing perfectly. I made an ample, intelligible, full, frank, and thoroughly satisfactory explanation of the whole thing, and—"
"What, again? Hang it, Jack, don't repeat yourself. This is the third time that you've repeated those words verbatim."

"Is it? Did I? Odd, too. Fact is, I believe I made up that sentence for my letter to Number Three, and I suppose I've got it by heart. At any rate, it's all right. You see I had three explanations to make, and they all had to be full, frank, ample, satisfactory, and all the rest of those words, you know. But it's awfully hard work. It's wearing on the constitution. It destroys the nervous system. I tell you what it is, old chap—I'm serious—if this sort of thing is to go on, hang it, I'll die of exhaustion."

"So that was the end of your troubles for that day?"

"Well—yes—but not the end of my day. I got away from the widow by eight o'clock, and then trotted over to Louie."

"Louie?"

"Yes, Louie. Why, man—why not?"

"What, after the late mitten?"

"Mitten? of course. What do you suppose I care for that? Isn't Louie the best friend I have? Isn't she my only comfort? Doesn't she give magnificent advice to a fellow, and all that? Louie? Why, man alive, it's the only thing I have to look forward to! Of course. Well, you see, Louie was luckily disengaged. The other girls were at whist with their father and the aunt. So I had Louie to myself."

"I hope you didn't do the sentimental again."

"Sentimental? Good Lord! hadn't I been overwhelmed and choked with sentiment all day long? Sentiment? Of all the bosh—but never mind. Louie at least didn't bother me in that way. Yes, it's a fact, Macrorie, she's got an awful knack of giving comfort to a fellow."

"Comfort?"

"Well, I can't exactly explain it."

"I suppose she was very sad, and sympathetic, and all that. At any rate, she didn't know the real trouble that you'd been having?"

"Didn't she, though?"

"No, of course not; how could she?"

"Why, she began questioning me, you know."

"Questioning you?"

"Yes—about—the three oranges, you know."

"Well, and how did you manage to fight her off?"

"Fight her off?"

"Yes."

"Why, I couldn't."

"Couldn't?"

"No."

"Nonsense! A fellow that could baffle the widow, wouldn't have any trouble in baffling Louie."

"Oh, that's all very well; but you don't know the peculiar way she goes to work. She's such an awful tease. And she keeps at it too, like a good fellow."

"Still you were safe from her by reason of the very fact that your daily adventures were things that you could not tell her."

"Couldn't I, though?"

"Of course not."

"I don't see why not."

"Impossible."

"But I did."

"You did?"

"I did."

"To Louie?"

"Yes, to Louie."

Again my thoughts and feelings found expression in a whistle.

"You see," resumed Jack, "she baged and questioned, and teased and teased, till at last she got it all out of me. And the way she took it! Laughing all the time, the provoking little witch, her eyes
dancing with fun, and her soul in a perfect ecstasy over my sorrows. I was quiet at first, but at length got huffy. You see if she cared for a fellow she ought to pity him instead of laughing at him."

"But she doesn't pretend to care for you—and lucky for her too."

"That's true," said Jack, dolefully.

"But what did she say about it?"

"Say? Oh, she teased and teased, and then when she had pumped me dry she burst out into one of her fits—and then I got huffy—and she at once pretended to be very demure, the little sinner, though I saw her eyes twinkling with fun all the time. And at last she burst out:

"'Oh, Captain Randolph! You're so awfully absurd. I can't help it, I must laugh. Now ain't you awfully funny? Confess. Please confess, Captain Randolph. Ple-e-e-ease do, like a good Captain Randolph. Ple-e-e-ease, Pleease!"

"So my grim features relaxed, and I looked benignly at her, whereupon she burst out laughing again in my face.

"'Well, I can't help it, I'm sure,' she said. 'You do look so droll. You try to make me laugh, and I laugh, and can't help it, and then you blame me for doing the very thing you make me do, and I think it's a shame—there, now.'

"Whereupon she began to pout, and look hurt, and so, you know, I had to go to work and explain to her."

"What! not another explanation, I hope. A 'full, frank, free, fresh, ample,' and all that sort of thing, I suppose."

"Oh, bother, chaff! I'm in earnest. I merely explained that I didn't take any offence from her laughter, but that I thought that if she cared for a fellow she wouldn't laugh at him.

"'But, I never said I cared for you,' said she.

"Oh, well—you know what I mean—you're my friend, you know, and my only comfort,' said I.

"At this she went off again.

"'Well, then,' said I, 'what are you?'

"She sat and thought.

"'Well,' said she, 'I won't be your friend, for that's too cold; I won't be your sister, for that's too familiar. Let me see—what ought I to be? I can't be your guardian, for I'm too volatile—what, then, can I be? Oh, I see! I'll tell you, Captain Randolph, what I'll be. I'll pretend that I'm your aunt. There, sir.'

"'Well, thence,' said I, 'my own dear aunt.'

"'No. That won't do—you are always absurd when you grow affectionate or sentimental. You may call me aunt—but no sentiment.'

"'Well, Aunt Louie.'

"She demurred a little, but finally, I gained my point. After this she gave me some good advice, and I left and came straight to you, to find your room empty."

"Advice? You said she gave you advice? What was it?"

"Well, she advised me to get immediate leave of absence, and go home for a time. I could then have a breathing-space to decide on my future."

"Capital! Why, what a perfect little trump Louie is! Jack, my boy, that's the very thing you'll have to do."

Jack shook his head.

"Why not?" He shook his head again.

"Well, what did you say to Louie?"

"Why, I told her that it was impossible. She insisted that it was the very thing I ought to do, and wanted to know why I wouldn't. I refused to tell, whereupon she began to coax and tease, and tease and coax, and so the end of it was, I told her."
"What was it?"

"Why, I told her I couldn't think of going away where I couldn't see her; that I would have blown my brains out by this time if it weren't for her; and that I'd blow my brains out when I went home, if it weren't for the hope of seeing her to-morrow."

"The devil you did!" said I, dryly.

"What I after being mittened?"

"Yes," said Jack. "It was on my mind to say it, and I said it."

"And how did Louie take it?"

"Not well. She looked coolly at me, and said:

"'Captain Randolph, I happened to be speaking sensibly. You seemed to be in earnest when you asked for my opinion, and I gave it.'"

"'And I was in earnest,' I said.

"'How very absurd!' said she. 'The fable of the shepherd-boy who cried wolf, is nothing to you. It seems to be a fixed habit of yours to go about to all the young ladies of your acquaintance threatening to blow your brains out. Now, in getting up a sentiment for my benefit, you ought at least to have been original, and not give to me the same second-hand one which you had already sent to Number Three.'"

"She looked so cold, that I felt frightened.

"'You're—you're—not offended?' said I. 'I'm sure—'

"'Oh, no,' said she, interrupting me; 'I'm not offended. I'm only disappointed in you. Don't apologize, for you'll only make it worse.'"

"'Well,' said I, 'I'm very much obliged to you for your advice—but circumstances over which I have no control prevent me from taking it. There—is that satisfactory?"
"Do you know what you've done?" said he, abruptly, without greeting or salutation of any kind."—page 65.
CHAPTER XIX.

O'HALLORAN'S AGAIN.—A STARTLING REVELATION.—THE LADY OF THE ICE.—FOUND AT LAST.—CONFUSION, EMBARRASSMENT, RETICENCE, AND SHYNESS, SUCCEEDED BY WIT, FASCINATION, LAUGHTER, AND WITCHING SMILES.

After waiting impatiently all day, and beguiling the time in various ways, the hour at length came when I could go to O'Halloran's. I confess, my feelings were of rather a tumultuous description. I would see the ladies again. I would renew my endeavors to find out the great mystery of the ice. Such were my intentions, and I had firmly resolved to make direct questions to Nora and Marion, and see if I couldn't force them, or coax them, or argue them, into an explanation of their strange agitation. Such an explanation, I felt, would be a discovery of the object of my search.

Full of these thoughts, intentions, and determinations, I knocked at O'Halloran's door, and was ushered by the servant into the comfortable parlor. O'Halloran stood there in the middle of the room. Nora was standing not far from him. Marion was not there; but O'Halloran and Nora were both looking at me, as I entered, with strange expressions.

O'Halloran advanced quickly, and caught me by the hand.

"D'ye know what ye've done?" said he, abruptly, without greeting or salutation of any kind. "D'ye know what ye've done? Ye seeved moy loife at the concert. But are ye aweer what you've done besidees?"

He looked at me earnestly, and with so strange an expression that for a moment I thought he must be mad.

"Well, really," said I, somewhat confusedly, "Mr. O'Halloran, I must confess I'm not aware of any thing in particular."

"He doesn't know!" cried O'Halloran.

"He doesn't know. 'Tisn't the slightest conception that he has! Will, thin, me boy," said he—and all this time he held my hand, and kept wringing it hard—"will, thin—I've another dibt of gratichoed, and, what's more, one that I nivir can raypay. D'ye know what ye've done? D'ye know what ye are? No? Will, thin, I'll tell ye. Ye're the seevor of me Nora, me darlin', me pride, me own. She was the one that ye seeved on the oice, and rescued from de-struction. There she stands. Look at her. But for you, she'd be now lost forivir to the poor owld man whose light an' loife an' trisure she always was. Nora, jewel, there he is, as sure as a gun, though whoy he didn't reconoize ye last night passes mny faible compayhinsion, so it does."

Saying this, he let go my hand and looked toward Nora.

At this astounding announcement I stood simply paralyzed. I stared at each in succession. To give an idea of my feelings is simply impossible. I must refer every thing to the imagination of the reader; and, by way of comparison to assist his imagination, I beg leave to call his attention to our old friend, the thunder-bolt. "Had a thunder-bolt burst," and all that sort of thing. Fact, sir. Dumbfounded. By Jove! that word even does not begin to express the idea.

Now for about twenty hours, in dreams as well as in waking moments, I had been brooding over the identity of the lady of the ice, and had become convinced that the O'Halloran ladies knew something about it; yet so obtuse was I that I had not suspected that the lady herself might be found in this house. In fact, such an event was at once
so romantic and so improbable that it did not even suggest itself. But now here was the lady herself. Here she stood. Now I could understand the emotion, the agitation, and all that, of the previous evening. This would at once account for it all. And here she stood—the lady herself—and that lady was no other than Miss O'Halloran.

By Jove!

Miss O'Halloran looked very much confused, and very much embarrassed. Her eyes lowered and sought the floor, and in this way she advanced and took my proffered hand. 'Tpon my life, I don't think I ever saw any thing more beautiful than she was as this confusion covered her lovely face; and the eyes which thus avoided mine seemed to my imagination still more lovely than they had been before.

And this was the one—I thought, as I took her hand—this was the one—the companion of my perilous trip—the life that I had saved. Yet this discovery filled me with wonder. This one, so gay, so genial, so laughter-loving—this one, so glowing with the bloom of health, and the light of life, and the sparkle of wit—this one! It seemed impossible. There swept before me on that instant the vision of the ice, that quivering form clinging to me, that pallid face, those despairing eyes, that expression of piteous and agonizing entreaty, those wild words of horror and of anguish. There came before me the phantom of that form which I had upraised from the ice when it had sunk down in lifelessness, whose white face rested on my shoulder as I bore it away from the grasp of death; and that vision, with all its solemn, tragic awfulness seemed out of keeping with this. Miss O'Halloran? Impossible! But yet it must be so, since she thus confessed it. My own memory had been at fault. The face on the ice which haunted me was not the face that I saw before me; but, then, Miss O'Halloran in despair must have a different face from Miss O'Halloran in her happy and peaceful home. All these thoughts passed through me as I took her hand; but they left me with the impression that my vision was a mistake, and that this lady was in very deed the companion of that fearful journey.

I pressed her hand in silence. I could not speak. Under the pressure of thoughts and recollections that came sweeping in upon me, I was dumb; and so I wandered away, and fell into a seat. Yet, in my stupefaction, I could see that Miss O'Halloran showed an emotion equal to mine. She had not spoken a word. She sat down, with her eyes on the floor, and much agitation in her manner.

"Nora, me pet," said O'Halloran, "haven't ye any expression of gratitude?"

Miss O'Halloran raised her face, and looked at me with earnest eyes.

"Indeed—indeed," she said—"it is not from want of gratitude that I am silent. My gratitude is too strong for words. Lieutenant Macrorie needs no assurance of mine, I know, to convince him how I admire his noble conduct—"

The sound of her voice roused me from my own abstraction.

"Oh, of course," said I, "a fellow knows all that sort of thing, you know; and I feel so glad about the service I was able to render you, that I'm positively grateful to you for being there. Odd, though—wasn't it?—that I didn't recognize you. But then, you see, the fact is, you looked so different then from what you do now. Really, you seem like another person—you do, by Jove!"

At this Miss O'Halloran looked down, and seemed embarrassed.

"But what made you clear out so soon
from the Frenchman's?" said I, suddenly.
"You've no idea how it bothered me. By
Jove! it didn't seem altogether fair to me,
you know. And then you didn't even leave
your address."

Miss O'Halloran's confusion seemed to
increase. She murmured something about
having to hurry home—pressed for time—
fear of her friends being anxious—and all
that.

Then I asked her anxiously if she had
been any the worse for it.

"Oh, no," she said; "no ill con-
sequences had resulted."

By this time I had sense enough to per-
cieve that the subject was an extremely un-
pleasant one. A moment's further thought
showed me that it couldn't be any thing
clear. Unpleasant! I should think so.
Was it not suggestive of sorrow and of
despair? Had she not witnessed things
which were never to be forgotten? Had
she not seen her hapless driver go down
beneath the icy waters? Had she not her-
self stood face to face with an awful doom?
Had she not twice—yes, and thrice—tasted
of the bitterness of death?

"I beg pardon," said I, as these thoughts
came to me—"it's a painful subject. I
spoke thoughtlessly; but I won't allude to
it again. It was bad enough for me; but
it must have been infinitely worse for you.
The fact is, my curiosity got the better of
my consideration for your feelings."

"That's true," said O'Halloran; "it's a
peevish subject."

At this Miss O'Halloran looked immensely
relieved. She raised her head, and involun-
tarily cast upon me a touching look of grati-
tude. Yes; it must, indeed, have been a
painful subject. The consciousness of this
made me eager to make amends for my
fault, and so I began to rattle on in a lively
strain about a thousand things; and Miss

O'Halloran, seizing the opportunity thus
held out of casting dull care away, at once
rose superior to her embarrassment and
confusion, and responded to my advances
with the utmost liveliness and gayety. The
change was instantaneous and marked. A
moment ago she had been constrained and
stiff and shy; now she was gay and lively
and spirited. This change, which thus took
place before my eyes, served in some mea-
ure to explain that difference which I saw
between the Lady of the Ice and Miss
O'Halloran in her own home.

O'Halloran himself joined in. He was
gay, and genial, and jocose. At about nine
o'clock Marion came in. She seemed dull
and distressed. She gave me a cold hand, and
then sat down in silence. She did not say
any thing whatever. She did not seem even
to listen, but sat, with her head leaning on
her hand, like one whose thoughts are far
away. Yet there was a glory about her
sad and melancholy beauty which could not
but arrest my gaze, and often and often I
found my eyes wandering to that face of
loveliness. Twice—yes, three times—as my
gaze thus wandered, I found her eyes fixed
upon me with a kind of eager scrutiny—a
fixed intensity which actually was startling
to encounter. And strange, vague, wild,
unformed memories arose, and odd ideas,
and fantastic suspicions. Her face became
thus like one of those which one sees in a
crowd hastily, and then loses, only to rack
his brain in vain endeavors to discover who
the owner of the face might be. So it was
with me as I saw the dark face and the lus-
trous eyes of Marion.

And now, 'pon my life, I cannot say which
one of these two excited the most of my
admiration. There was Nora, with her
good-nature, her wit, her friendliness, her
witchery, her grace, the sparkle of her eye,
the music of her laugh. But there, too,
was Marion, whose eyes seemed to pierce to my soul, as twice or thrice I caught their gaze, and whose face seemed to have some weird influence over me, puzzling and bewildering me by suggestions of another face, which I had seen before. I was fascinated by Nora; I was in love with her; but by Marion I was thrown under a spell.

On the whole, Nora seemed to me more sympathetic. With all her brightness and joyousness, there was also a strange timidity, at times, and shyness, and sly glances. An occasional flush, also, gave her a sweet confusion of manner, which heightened her charms. All these were signs which I very naturally interpreted in my own favor. What else should I do?

I have been calling her indiscriminately Miss O'Halloran and Nora. But to her face I did not call her by any name. Nora, of course, was not to be thought of. On the other hand, Miss O'Halloran seemed too distant. For the memory of our past experience made me feel very near to her, and intimate. Had we not been together on a journey where hours create the familiarities of years? Was not her life mine? In fact, I felt to her as a man feels when he meets the old flame of his boyhood. She is married, and has passed beyond him. But her new name is too cold, and her old name may not be used. So he calls her nothing. He meets her as a friend, but does not know now to name her.

As we talked, O'Halloran sat there, and sometimes listened, and sometimes chimed in. An uncommonly fine-looking old fellow he was, too. Although about sixty, his form was as erect as that of a young man, and his sinewy limbs gave signs of great strength. He sat in an easy-chair—his iron-gray hair clustering over his broad brow; his eyes keen, penetrating, but full of fun; his nose slightly curved, and his lips quivering into smiles; small whiskers of a vanished fashion on either cheek; and small hands—a right royal, good fellow—witty, intellectual, and awfully eccentric—at once learned and boistish, but for all that perhaps all the better adapted for social enjoyment, and perhaps I may add conviviality. There was a glorious flow of animal spirits in the man, which could not be repressed, but came rolling forth, expressed in his rich Leinster brogue. He was evidently proud of his unparalleled girls; but of these all his tenderness seemed to go forth toward Nora. To her, and apparently to her alone, he listened, with a proud affection in his face and in his eyes; while any little sally of hers was always sure to be received with an outburst of rollicking laughter, which was itself contagious, and served to increase the general hilarity.

But the general hilarity did not extend to Marion. She was like a star, and sat apart, listening to every thing, but saying nothing. I caught sometimes, as I have said, the lustrous gleam of her eyes, as they pierced me with their earnest gaze; and when I was looking at Nora, and talking with her, I was conscious, at times, of Marion's eyes. O'Halloran did not look at her, or speak to her. Was she under a cloud? Was this her usual character? Or was she sad and serious with the pressure of some secret purpose? Such were my thoughts; but then I suddenly decided that by such thoughts I was only making an ass of myself, and concluded that it was nothing more than her way. If so, it was an uncommonly impressive way.

The ladies retired early that evening. Marion, on leaving, gave me a last searching glance; while Nora took leave with her most bewildering smile. The glance and the smile both struck home; but, which affected me most, it is impossible to say
CHAPTER XX.


The servants brought us the generous preparations for the evening—sugar, spoons, hot water, tumblers, and several other things.

O'Halloran began by expressing his gratitude, and saying that Nora could not speak on the subject. He hoped I would see, by that, why it was that she had not answered my questions. Whereupon I hastened to apologize for asking questions which so harshly reminded her of a terrible tragedy. Our mutual explanations were soon exhausted, and we turned to subjects in general.

As our symposium proceeded, O'Halloran grew more and more eloquent, more discursive, more learned, more enthusiastic. He didn't expect me to take any part in the conversation. He was only anxious that I should "take it hot," and keep my pipe and my tumbler well in hand. He was like Coleridge, and Johnson, and other great men who abhor dialogues, and know nothing but monologues.

On this occasion he monologued on the following subjects: The Darwinian hypothesis, the positive philosophy, Protestant missions, temperance societies, Fichte, Lessing, Hegel, Carlyle, mummies, the Apocalypse, Maimonides, John Scotus Erigena, the steam-engine of Hero, the Serapeum, the Dorian Emigration, and the Trojan War. This at last brought him on the subject of Homer.

He paused for a moment here.

"D'ye want to know," said he, "the thrue business of me loife, an' me sowl occupacion?"

I bowed and gave a feeble smile. I thought of Fenian agencies and a dozen other things, and fancied that in this hour of confidence he would tell all. I had several times wondered why he lived in a place which he hated so, and had a vague idea that he was some kind of a secret emissary, though there was certainly not a single thing in his character which might warrant such a supposition.

"Me object," said O'Halloran, looking solemnly at me, "and the whole ecm of me loife is the Oineesozin of the language of the Saxon. He's thrust his language on us, an' my ecm is to meek it our own, to illivate it—an' by one schtoopindous illustreession to give it a pleece among the lethereal doialicts of the wurld."

"Oineesozin?" said I, slowly.

"Yis, Oineesozin," said O'Halloran.

"An' I'm going to do this by mains of a thranseection of Homer. For considher. Since Chapman no thransection has been made. Pope and Cowper are contimptible. Darby is onraydable. Gladstone's attempt on the fust buk, an' Mat Arnold's on the seem, an' Worsley's Spinsayrians are all feclures. Ye see, they think only of maythers, an' don't considher doialicts. Homer wrote in the Oionic doialict, an' shud be thranlated into the modern ayuualint of that same."

"Oh, I see," said I, "but is there such an equivalent?"

"Yis," said he, solemnly. "Ye see, the Scotch doialict has been illivatid into a Doric by the janius of a Burruns; and so loikewise shall the Oirish be illivatid into
an Oioneean dialect by the janius of O'Halloran.

"For Oirish is the natural an' conjayncal ripplesensitive of the ancient Oioneean. It's vowel-sounds, its diphthongs, its shuperabundance of legends, all show this most pleenly. So, too, if we apploy this modern Oioneean to a trunsilation of Homer, we see it has schtopindous advantages. The Homeric neems, the ipithets, and the woild alternection of dactyls an' spondees, may all be ripplesinted boy a neettive and conjayncal mayther. Take for a spicimin Barny O'Brollaghan. "'Twas on a windly night about two o'clock in the momn.' That is the neettive misuro of the Orish bardis, an' is iminintly adapted to renderth the Homeric swinge. It consists of an Oiambic pinthinmitir followed by a dactylie thrpody; an' in rhythm projuces the effects of the dactylic hixamimitir. Compeer wid this the ballad mayther, an' the hayroie mayther, and the Spinserian stanzas, of Worsley, an' Gladstone's Saxon throchaes, and Darby's dull blank verse, an' the litheral prose, an' Mat Arnold's attimpts at hixameters, an' Dain somebody's hindoosyllables. They're one an' all ayqually contimipble. But in this neettive Oirish loine we have not only doialietic advantages, but also an amezeing number of others. It's the doiret ripplesinteect of the Homiric loine, fust, in the number of fate; secondly, in the sayzial pause; thirdly, in the capaceteer for a dactylic an' spondale inding, an' fowerithly, in the shuperabundance of sonorous ipithits and rowylling syllabeefeceetions. An' all this I can prove to ye by spicimins of me own trunsilation."

With this he went to a Davenport at one end of the room, and brought out a pile of manuscript closely written. Then he seated himself again.

"I'll raid ye passages here an' there," said he. "The fust one is the reception of the imbsby by Achilles." Saying this, he took the manuscript and began to read the following in a very rich, broad brogue, which made me think that he cultivated this brogue of his purposely, and out of patriotic motives, from a desire to elevate his loved Irish dialect to an equality with the literary standard English:

"'He spake. Pat Rokies heard, an'didn't da clothe for till do it,
But tuk the mate-thray down, an' into the foyre he threw it:
A shape's choine an' a goat's he threwed on top of the platter,
An' wan from a lovely plg, than which there wor nvr a fatter;
Thase O'Tommedon tuk, O'Kelly deioved thim nately,
He meed mince-mate av thim all, an' thin he spitted thim swately;
To sich entoin' fud they all extindied thir arrums,
Till fud and drink lolkewise had lost thir jaynial charrums;
Thin Ajax winked at Phaynx, O'Dishes take note of it gayly,
An' powerin' out some wolle, he drank till the health ov O'Kelly."

After this he read the description of the palace of Antinous in the "Odyssey:

"'For beuchs highte o'v brass alch wee vos frrumlee buildid,
From the front dare till the back, an' a Nate blue cornells ffelld it;
An' there was gowldin dures, that tastee dome seccrin',
An' silver posts lolkewise that elid the breezin' dare in;
An' lovely gowldin dogs the tuthernance wee stud fast in,
Thin same, H. Phaeus meed, which had a turrun for caein';
Widout that speechons hall there grow a gairdin, be Jakers!
A fince purticts that ecme of fower (I think it is) acres,'"
I have but an indistinct recollection of the rest of the evening. If I was not sound asleep, I must have been in a semi-doze, retaining just sufficient consciousness to preserve the air of an absorbed listener. I had nothing but an innumerable multitude of visions, which assumed alternately the shape of Nora and of Marion. When at length I rose to go, O'Halloran begged me to stay longer. But, on looking at my watch, I found it was half-past three, and so suggested in a general way that perhaps I'd better be in bed. Whereupon he informed me that he would not be at home on the following evening, but wouldn't I come the evening after. I told him I'd be very happy. But suddenly I recollected an engagement. "Well, will you be at leisure on the next evening?" said he. I told him I would be, and so I left, with the intention of returning on the third evening from that time.

I got home and went to bed; and in my dreams I renewed the events of that evening. Not the latter part of it, but the former part. There, before me, floated the forms of Nora and of Marion, the one all smiles, the other all gloom—the one all jest and laughter, the other silent and sombre—the one casting at me the glancing light of her soft, innocent, laughing eyes; the other flinging at me from her dark, lustrous orbs glances that pierced my soul. I'm an impressionable man. I own it. I can't help it. I was so made. I'm awfully susceptible. And so, 'pon my honor, for the life of me I couldn't tell which I admired most of these two fascinating, bewildering, lovely, bewitching, yet totally different beings. "Oh, Nora!" I cried—and immediately after, "Oh, Marion!"

CHAPTER XXI.

JACK ONCE MORE.—THE WOES OF A LOVER.—

It was late on the following morning when I rose. I expected to see Jack bouncing in, but there were no signs of him. I went about on my usual round, but he didn't turn up. I asked some of the other fellows, but none of them had seen him. I began to be anxious. Duns were abroad. Jack was in peril. The sheriff was near. There was no joke in it. Perhaps he was nabbed, or perhaps he was in hiding. The fact that no one had seen him was a very solemn and a very portentous one. I said nothing about my feelings, but, as the day wore on without bringing any sign of him, I began to be more anxious; and as the evening came I retired to my den, and there thoughts of Jack intermingled themselves with visions of Nora and Marion.

The hours of that evening passed very slowly. If I could have gone to O'Halloran's, I might have forgotten my anxiety; but, as I couldn't go to O'Halloran's, I could not get rid of my anxiety. What had become of him? Was he in limbo? Had he taken Louie's advice and flitted? Was he now gnashing his splendid set of teeth in drear confinement; or was he making a fool of himself, and an ass, by persisting in indulging in sentiment with Louie?

In the midst of these cogitations, eleven
o'clock came, and a few moments after in
bounced Jack himself.
I met him as the prodigal son was met by
his father.

He was gloomy. There was a cloud on
his broad, Jovian, hilarious, Olympian brow,
with its clustering ambrosial locks.

"Jack, old fellow! You come like sun-
shine through a fog. I've been bothering
about you all day. Have you been nabbed?
Are the duns abroad? Has the sheriff in-
vited you to a friendly and very confidential
conversation? You haven't been here for
two days."

"Yes, I have," said Jack, "I was here
last night, and waited till three, and then
walked off to sleep on it. You're up to
something yourself, old man, but look out.
Take warning by me. Don't plunge in too
deep. For my part, I haven't the heart
to pursue the subject. I've got beyond
the head-stone even. The river's the place
for me. But, Macrorie, promise me one
thing."

"Oh, of course—all right—go ahead."

"Well, if I jump into the river, don't let
them drag for me. Let me calmly drift
away, and be borne off into the Atlantic
Ocean. I want oblivion. Hang head-
stones! Let Anderson slide."

Saying this, Jack crammed some tobacco
into his pipe, lighted it, flung himself into
a chair, and began smoking most vigoro-
usly. I watched him for some time in silence.
There was a dark cloud on his sunny brow;
he looked woebegone and dismal, and,
though such expressions were altogether
out of harmony with the style of his face,
yet to a friendly eye they were sufficiently
visible. I saw that something new had
occurred. So I waited a time, think-
ing that he would volunteer his confidence;
but, as he did not, I thought I would ask
for it.

"By Jove!" said I, at last. "Hang it,
Jack, do you know, old man, you seem to
be awfully cut up about something—hit
hard—and all that sort of thing. What's
up? Any thing new? Out with it—clean
breast, and all that. 'Pon my life, I never
saw you so cut up before. What is
it?"

Jack took his pipe from his mouth,
rubbed his forehead violently, stared at
me for a few moments, and then slowly
ejaculated.

"There's a beastly row—tremendous—
no end—that's what there is."

"A row?"

"Yes—no end of a row."

"Who? What? Which of them?"

"All of them. Yesterday, and to-day,
and to be continued to-morrow. Such is
life. Sic transit, et cetera. Good Lord!
Macrorie, what's a fellow to do but drown
himself? Yes, my boy—oblivion! that's
what I want. And I'll have it. This life
isn't the thing for me. I was never made
to be badgered. The chief end of man is
for other things than getting snubbed by
woman. And I'm not going to stand it.
Here, close by, is a convenient river. I'll
seek an acquaintance with its icy tide,
rather than have another day like this."

"But I'm all in the dark. Tell what it
is that has happened."

Jack inhaled a few more whiffs of the
smoke that cheers but not inebriates, and
then found voice to speak:

"You see it began yesterday. I started
off at peace with the world, and went most
dutifully to call on Miss Phillips. Well, I
went in and found her as cool as an icicle.
I didn't know what was up, and proceeded
to do the injured innocent. Whereupon she
turned upon me, and gave it to me then and
there, hot and heavy. I didn't think it was
in her. I really didn't—by Jove! The way
she gave it to me,” and Jack paused in wonder.

“What about?” said I.

“The widow!” groaned Jack.

“The widow?” I repeated.

“Yes—the widow.”

“But how did she hear about it so soon?”

“Oh, easy enough. It’s all over town now, you know. Her friends here heard of it, and some were incredulous, and others were indignant. At any rate, both classes rushed with delightful unanimity to inform her, so you may imagine the state of mind I found her in.

“You can easily imagine what she said. I don’t think much of your imagination, Macrorie, but in this case it don’t require a very vivid one. The worst of it is, she was quite right to feel indignant. The only thing about it all that gave me the smallest relief, was the fact that she didn’t do the pathetic. She didn’t shed a tear. She simply questioned me. She was as stiff as a ramrod, and as cold as a stone. There was no mercy in her, and no consideration for a fellow’s feelings. She succeeded in making out that I was the most contemptible fellow living.”

“And what did you say?”

“Say? What could I say? She forced me to own up about the widow. Hang it, you know I can’t lie. So, after trying to dodge her questions, I answered them. She wouldn’t let me dodge them. But there was one thing left. I swore to her, by all that was true, that I didn’t care a fig for the widow, that my engagement with her arose altogether through a mistake. She pressed me hard on this, and I had to tell this too.”

“What? Look here, Jack—you didn’t drag in Louie into your confounded scrape?”

“Do you think I’m such a villain as that?” said Jack, indignantly. “No—of course I didn’t. Louie—I’d die first. No. I told her some story about my mistaking her for a friend, whose name I didn’t mention. I told her that I took the widow’s hand by mistake—just in fun, you know—thinking it was my friend, and all that; and before I knew it the widow had nabbed me.”

“Well?”

“Well, she didn’t condescend to ask the name of my friend. She thought the widow was enough at a time, I suppose, and so she asked me about the state of my feelings toward her. And here I expressed myself frankly. I told her that my only desire was to get out of her clutches—that it was all a mistake, and that I was in an infernal scrape, and didn’t know how to get out of it.

“Such strong language as this mollified her a little, and she began to believe me. Yet she did not soften altogether. At last, I pitched into the widow hot and heavy. This restored her to her usual self. She forgave me altogether. She even said that she was sorry for me. She hinted, too, that if she ever saw the widow, she’d have it out with her.”

“Heaven forbid!” said I. “Keep them apart, Jack, if you can,”

Jack groaned.

“So it’s all right, is it? I congratulate you—as far as it’s worth congratulation, you know. So you got out of it, did you? A ‘full, fresh, frank, free, formal, ample, exhaustive, and perfectly satisfactory explanation,’ hey? That’s the style of thing, is it?”

Jack gnashed his teeth.

“Come, now—old boy—no chaff. I’m beyond that. Can’t stand it. Fact is, you haven’t heard the whole story yet, and I don’t feel like telling the rest of it, if you
interrupt a fellow with your confounded humbug.”

“Go ahead—don’t fear, Jack—I won’t chaff!”

Jack drew a long breath.

“Well, then—I took her out for a drive. We had a very good time, though both of us were a little preoccupied, and I thought she had altered awfully from what she used to be; and then, you know, after leaving her, I went to see the widow.”

“You didn’t tell her where you were going, of course?”

“No,” said Jack, with a sigh. “Well, you see, I went to the widow, and I found that she had heard about my calling on Miss Phillips, and driving out with her for a couple of hours, and I don’t know what else. She was calm, and quiet, and cool, and simply wanted to know what it all meant. Well, do you know that sort of coolness is the very thing that I can’t stand. If she’d raved at me, or scolded, or been passionate, or gone on in any kind of a way, I could have dealt with her; but with a person like that, who is so calm, and cool, and quiet, I haven’t the faintest idea how to act.

“I mumbled something or other about ‘old friendship’—’stranger in a strange land’—horrid rot—what an ass she must have thought me!—but that’s the way it was. She didn’t say any thing. She began to talk about something else in a conventional way—the weather, I think. I couldn’t do any thing. I made a vague attempt at friendly remonstrance with her about her coolness; but she didn’t notice it. She went on talking about the weather. She was convinced that it would snow. I, for my part, was convinced that there was going to be a storm—a hurricane—a tornado—any thing. But she only smiled at my vehemence, and finally I left, with a general idea that there was thunder in the air.

“Well, you know, I then went off to see Louie. But I didn’t get any satisfaction there. The other girls were present, and the aunt. There wasn’t any whist, and so I had to do the agreeable to the whole party. I waited until late, in the hope that some chance might turn up of a private chat with Louie, but none came. So at last I came home, feeling a general disgust with the world and the things of the world.”

“Rather hard, that,” said I, as Jack relapsed into moody silence.

“Hard?” said he; “that was yesterday, but it was nothing to what I met with to-day.”

“To-day?—why, what’s up worse than that?”

“Every thing. But I’ll go on and make a clean breast of it. Only don’t laugh at me, Macorie, or I’ll cut.”

“Laugh? Do I ever laugh?”

Jack took a few more puffs, and relieved his sorrow-laden breast by several preliminary and preparatory sighs, after which he proceeded:

“To-day,” he began, “I got up late. I felt heavy. I anticipated a general row. I dressed. I breakfasted, and, just as I was finishing, the row began. A letter was brought in from the post-office. It was from Number Three.”

“Number Three?” I cried.

“Number Three,” repeated Jack. “As if it wasn’t bad enough already, she must come forward to add herself to those who were already crushing me to the earth, and driving me mad. It seemed hard, by Jove! I tell you what it is, old chap, nobody’s so remorseless as a woman. Even my duns have been more merciful to me than these friends whom I love. It’s too bad, by Jove, it is!”

“Well. Number Three’s letter was simply tremendous. She had heard every
thing. I've already told you that she keeps the run of me pretty well, though how she manages it I can't imagine—and now it seems she heard, on the same day, of my engagement to the widow, and of the arrival of Miss Phillips, to whom I was also engaged. This news seemed to drive her wild with indignation. She mentioned these facts to me, and ordered me to deny them at once. She declared that it was impossible for any gentleman to act so dishonorably, and said that nothing but the character of her informant could lead her to ask me to deny such foul slanders.

"That's the way she put it. That's the style of thing she flung at me when I was already on my back. That's Number Three for you! And the worst of it is, I don't know what to say in reply. I tell you what it is now, Macrorie, that was a pretty tough beginning for the day. I felt it, and I left my room with a dark presentiment in my mind, and the same general idea of a brooding thunder-storm, which I had experienced the evening before.

"Then I went to see Miss Phillips, and this was my frame of mind. I found her calm, cold, and stiff as an iceberg. Not a single kind word. No consideration for a fellow at all. I implored her to tell me what was the matter. She didn't rail at me; she didn't reproach me; but proceeded in the same cruel, inconsiderate, iceberg fashion, to tell me what the matter was. And I tell you, old boy, the long and the short of it was, there was the very mischievous to pay, and the last place in Quebec that I ought to have entered was that particular place. But then, how did I know? Besides, I wanted to see her."

"What was it?" I asked, seeing Jack hesitate.

"What! Why, who do you think had been there? The widow herself! She had come to call on Miss Phillips, and came with a fixed design on me. In a few moments she managed to introduce my name. Trotting me out in that fashion doesn't strike me as being altogether fair, but she did it. Mrs. Llvelopen, who is Miss Phillips's aunt, took her up rather warmly, and informed her that I was engaged to Miss Phillips. The widow smiled, and said I was a sad man, for I had told her, when I engaged myself to her, that my affair with Miss Phillips was all broken off, and had repeated the same thing two evenings before. She also informed them that I visited her every day, and was most devoted. To all this Miss Phillips had to listen, and could not say one word. She had sense enough, however, to decline any altercation with the widow, and reserve her remarks for me. And now, old boy, you see what I caught on entering the presence of Miss Phillips. She did not weep; she did not sigh; she did not reproach; she did not cry—she simply questioned me, standing before me cold and icy, and flinging her bitter questions at me. The widow had said this and that. The widow had repeated such and such words of mine. The widow had also subjected her to bitter shame and mortification. And what had I to say? She was too much of a lady to denounce or to scold, and too high-hearted even to taunt me; too proud, too lofty, to deign to show that she felt the cut; she only questioned me; she only asked me to explain such and such things. Well, I tried to explain, and gave a full and frank account of every thing, and, as far as the widow was concerned, I was perfectly truthful. I declared again that it was all a mistake, and that I'd give any thing to get rid of her. This was all perfectly true, but it wasn't by any means satisfactory to Miss Phillips. She's awfully high-strung, you know. She
couldn’t overlook the fact that I had given
the widow to understand that it was all
broken off with us. I had never said so,
but I had let the widow think so, and that
was enough.

“Well, you know, I got huffy at last, and
said she didn’t make allowances for a fel-
low, and all that. I told her that I was
awfully careless, and was always getting
into confounded scrapes, but that it would
all turn out right in the end, and some day
she’d understand it all. Finally, I felt so
confoundedly mean, and so exactly like
some infernal whipped cur, that I then and
there asked her to take me, on the spot,
as I was, and fulfil her vow to me. I swore
that the widow was nothing to me, and
wished she was in Jericho. At this she
smiled slightly, and said that I didn’t know
what I was saying, and, in fact, declined my
self-sacrificing offer. So there I was—and
I’ll be hanged, Macorie, isn’t it odd?—
there’s the third person that’s refused to
marry me off-hand! I vow I did what I
could. I offered to marry her at once, and
she declined just as the others did. With
that I turned the tables on her, reproached
her for her coldness, told her that I had
given her the highest possible mark of my
regard, and bade her adieu. We shook
hands. Hers was very languid, and she
looked at me quite indifferently. I told
her that she’d feel differently to-morrow,
and she said perhaps she might. And so
I left her.

“Well, then, I had the widow to visit,
but the letter and the affair with Miss Phili-
ps had worn out my resources. In any
ordinary case, the widow was too many
guns for me, but, in a case like this, she
was formidable beyond all description. So
I hunted up the chaplain, and made him go
with me. He’s a good fellow, and is ac-
quainted with her a little, and I knew that
she liked him. So we went off there to-
gether. Well, do you know, Macorie, I
believe that woman saw through the whole
thing, and knew why the chaplain had come
as well as I did. She greeted me civilly,
but rather shortly; and there was a half-
smile on her mouth, confound it! She’s an
awfully pretty woman, too! We were there
for a couple of hours. She made us dine—
that is to say, I expected to dine as a mat-
ter of course, and she invited the chaplain.
So we stayed, and I think for two hours I
did not exchange a dozen words with her.
She directed her conversation almost exclu-
sively to the chaplain. I began to feel jeal-
ous at last, and tried to get her attention,
but it was no go. I’m rather dull, you know
—good-natured, and all that, but not clever
—while the chaplain is one of the cleverest
men going; and the widow’s awfully clever,
too. They got beyond me in no time.
They were talking all sorts of stuff about
Gregorian chants, ecclesiastic symbolism,
mediaeval hymns, the lion of St. Mark,
chasuble, alb, and all that sort of thing,
you know, no end, and I sat like a log lis-
tening, just the same as though they spoke
Chinese, while the widow took no more
notice of me than if I’d been a Chinaman.
And she kept up that till we left. And
that was her way of paying me off. And
the chaplain thought she was an awfully
clever woman, and admired her—no end.
And I felt as jealous as Othello.

“Then I hurried off to Louie. But luck
was against me. There was a lot of fel-
lows there, and I didn’t get a chance. I
only got a pleasant greeting and a bright
look, that was all. I was longing to get
her into a corner, and have a little comfort,
and a little good advice. But I couldn’t.
Misfortunes never come singly. To-day
every thing has been blacker than mid-
night. Number Three, Miss Phillips, and
I REVEAL MY SECRET.

CHAPTER XXII.

I REVEAL MY SECRET.—TREMENDOUS EFFECTS OF THE REVELATION.—MUTUAL EXPLANATIONS, WHICH ARE BY NO MEANS SATISFACTORY.—JACK STANDS UP FOR WHAT HE CALLS HIS RIGHTS.—REMONSTRANCES AND REASONINGS, ENDING IN A GENERAL ROW.—JACK MAKES A DECLARATION OF WAR, AND TAKES HIS DEPARTURE IN A STATE OF UNPARALLELED HUFFINESS.

I could hold out no longer. I had preserved my secret jealously for two entire days, and my greater secret had been seething in my brain, and all that, for a day, Jack had given me his entire confidence. Why shouldn't I give him mine? I longed to tell him all. I had told him of my adventure, and why should I not tell of its happy termination? Jack, too, was fairly and thoroughly in the dumps, and it would be a positive boon to him if I could lead his thoughts away from his own sorrows to my very peculiar adventures.

"Jack," said I, at last, "I've something to tell you."

"Go ahead," cried Jack, from the further end of his pipe.

"It's about the Lady of the Ice," said I.

"Is it?" said Jack, dolefully.

"Yes; would you like to hear about it?"

"Oh, yes, of course," said Jack, in the same tone.

Whereupon I began with the evening of the concert, and told him all about the old man, and my rush to the rescue. I gave a very animated description of the scene, but, finding that Jack did not evince any particular interest, I cut it all short.

"Well," said I, "I won't bore you. I'll merely state the leading facts. I got the old fellow out. He took my arm, and insisted on my going home with him. I went home, and found there the Lady of the Ice."

"Odd, too," said Jack, languidly, puffing out a long stream of smoke; "don't see how you recognized her—thought you didn't remember, and all that. So you've found her at last, have you? Well, my dear fellow, low me to congratulate you. Deuced queer, too. By-the-way, what did you say her name was?"

"I didn't mention her name," said I.

"Ah, I see; a secret?"

"Oh, no. I didn't suppose you'd care about knowing."

"Bosh! Course I'd care. What was it, old boy? Tell a fellow. I'll keep dark—you know me."
"Her name," said I, "is Miss O'Halloran."

No sooner had I uttered that name, than an instantaneous and most astonishing change came over the whole face, the whole air, the whole manner, the whole expression, and the whole attitude, of Jack Randolph. He sprang up to his feet, as though he had been shot, and the pipe fell from his hands on the floor, where it lay smashed.

"WHAT!!" he cried, in a loud voice.

"Look here," said I—"what may be the meaning of all that? What's the row now?"

"What name did you say?" he repeated.

"Miss O'Halloran," said I.

"O'Halloran?" said he—"are you sure?"

"Of course, I'm sure. How can I be mistaken?"

"And her father—what sort of a man is he?"

"A fine old fellow," said I—"full of fun, well informed, convivial, age about sixty, well preserved, splendid face—"

"Is—is he an Irishman?" asked Jack, with deep emotion.

"Yes."

"Does—does he live in—in Queen Street?" asked Jack, with a gasp.

"The very street," said I.

"Number seven hundred and ninety-nine?"

"The very number. But see here, old chap, how the mischief do you happen to know so exactly all about that house? It strikes me as being deuced odd."

"And you saved her?" said Jack, without taking any notice of my question.

"Haven't I just told you so? Oh, bother! What's the use of all this fuss?"

"Miss O'Halloran?" said Jack.

"Miss O'Halloran," I repeated. "But will you allow me to ask what in the name of common-sense is the matter with you? Is there a bee in your bonnet, man? What's Miss O'Halloran to you, or you to Miss O'Halloran? I haven't you got enough women on your conscience already? Do you mean to drag her in? Don't try it, my boy—for I'm concerned there."

"Miss O'Halloran!" cried Jack. "Look here, Macrorie—you'd better take care."

"Take care?"

"Yes. Don't you go humbugging about there."

"I don't know what you're up to, dear boy. What's your little joke?"

"There's no joke at all about it," said Jack, harshly. "Do you know who Miss O'Halloran is?"

"Well, I know that she's the daughter of Mr. O'Halloran, and that he's a fine old fellow. Any further information, however, I shall be delighted to receive. You talk as though you know something about her. What is it? But don't slander. Not a word against her. That I won't stand."

"Slander! A word against her!" cried Jack. "Macrorie, you don't know who she is, or what she is to me. Macrorie, this Miss O'Halloran is that lady that we have been calling 'Number Three.'"

It was now my turn to be confounded. I, too, started to my feet, and not only my pipe, but my tumbler also, fell crashing on the floor.

"The devil she is!" I cried.

"She is—I swear she is—as true as I'm alive."

At this moment I had more need of a good, long, low whistle than ever I had in my life before. But I didn't whistle. Even a whistle was useless here to express the emotions that I felt at Jack's revelation. I stood and stared at him in silence. But I didn't see him. Other visions came before
"He sprang up to his feet as though he had been shot. 'What!' he cried, in a loud voice.

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my mind's eye, Horatio, which shut out Jack from my view. I was again in that delightful parlor; again Nora's form was near—her laughing face, her speaking eyes, her expression—now genial and sympathetic, now confused and embarrassed. There was her round, rosy, smiling face, and near it the sombre face of Marion, with her dark, penetrating eyes. And this winning face, this laughter-loving Venus—this was the one about whom Jack raved as his Number Three. This was the one whom he asked to run off with him. She! She run off, and with him! The idea was simple insanity. She had written him a letter—had she?—and it was a scorcher, according to his own confession. She had found him out, and thrown him over. Was not I far more to her than a fellow like Jack—I who had saved her from a hideous death? There could be no question about that. Was not her bright, beaming smile of farewell still lingering in my memory? And Jack had the audacity to think of her yet!

"Number Three," said I—"well, that's odd. At any rate, there's one of your troubles cut off."

"Cut off?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this, that Number Three won't bother you again."

Jack stood looking at me for some time in silence, with a dark frown on his brow.

"Look here, Macrorie," said he; "you force me to gather from your words what I am very unwilling to learn."

"What!" said I. "Is it that I admire Miss O'Halloran? Is that it? Come, now; speak plainly, Jack. Don't stand in the sulks. What is it that you want to say? I confess that I'm as much amazed as you are at finding that my Lady of the Ice is the same as your 'Number Three.' But such is the case; and now what are you going to do about it?"

"First of all," said Jack, coldly, "I want to know what you are proposing to do about it."

"I?" said I. "Why, my intention is, if possible, to try to win from Miss O'Halloran a return of that feeling which I entertain toward her."

"So that's your little game—is it?" said Jack, savagely.

"Yes," said I, quietly; "that's exactly my little game. And may I ask what objection you have to it, or on what possible right you can ground any conceivable objection?"

"Right?" said Jack—"every right that a man of honor should respect."

"Right?" cried I. "Right?"

"Yes, right. You know very well that she's mine."

"Yours! Yours!" I cried. "Yours! You call her 'Number Three.' That very name of itself is enough to shut your mouth forever. What! Do you come seriously to claim any rights over a girl, when by your own confession there are no less than two others to whom you have offered yourself? Do you mean to look me in the face, after what you yourself have told me, and say that you consider that you have any claims on Miss O'Halloran?"

"Yes, I do!" cried Jack. "I do, by Jove! Look here, Macrorie. I've given you my confidence. I've told you all about my affair with her. You know that only a day or two ago I was expecting her to elope with me—"

"Yes, and hoping that she wouldn't," I interrupted.

"I was not. I was angry when she refused, and I've felt hard about it ever since.
THE LADY OF THE ICE.

But she's mine all the same, and you know it."

"Yours? And so is Miss Phillips yours?" I cried, "and so is Mrs. Finnimore; and I swear I believe that, if I were to be sweet on Louie, you'd consider yourself injured. Hang it, man! What are you up to? What do you mean? At this rate, you'll claim every woman in Quebec. Where do you intend to draw the line? Would you be content if I were sweet on Miss Phillips? Wouldn't you be jealous if I were to visit the widow? And what would you say if I were seized with a consuming passion for Louie? Come, Jack—don't row; don't be quite insane. Sit down again, and take another pipe, and let's drop the subject."

"I won't drop the subject," growled Jack. "You needn't try to argue yourself out of it. You know very well that I got her first."

"Why, man, at this rate, you might get every woman in America. You seem to think that this is Utah."

"Come, no humbug, Macrorie. You know very well what I am to that girl."

"You! you!" I cried. "Why, you have told me already that she has found you out. Hang it, man! if it comes to that, what are you in her eyes compared with me? You've been steadily humbugging her ever since you first knew her, and she's found it out. But I come to her as the companion of the darkest hour of her life, as the one who saved her from death. You—good Lord!—do you pretend to put yourself in comparison with me? You, with your other affairs, and your conscious falsity to her, with me! Why, but for me, she would by this time be drifting down the river, and lying stark and dead on the beach of Anticosti. That is what I have done for her. And what have you done? I might have laughed over the joke of it before I knew her; but now, since I know her, and love her, when you force me to say what you have done, I declare to you that you have wronged her, and cheated her, and humbugged her, and she knows it, and you know it, and I know it. These things may be all very well for a lark; but, when you pretend to make a serious matter of them, they look ugly. Confound it! have you lost your senses?"

"You'll see whether I've lost my senses or not," said Jack, fiercely.

"You've got trouble enough on your shoulders, Jack," said I. "Don't get into any more. You actually have the face to claim no less than three women. Yes, four. I must count Louie, also. If this question were about Louie, wouldn't you be just as fierce?"

Jack did not answer.

"Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you say that I had violated your confidence? Wouldn't you declare that it was a wrong to yourself, and a bitter injury? If I had saved Louie's life, and then suddenly fallen in love with her, wouldn't you have warned me off in the same way? You know you would. But will you listen to reason? You can't have them all. You must choose one of them. Take Miss Phillips, and be true to your first vow. Take the widow, and be rich. Take Louie, and be happy. There you have it. There are three for you. As for Miss O'Halloran, she has passed away from you forever. I have snatched her from death, and she is mine forever."

"She shall never be yours!" cried Jack, furiously.

"She shall be mine!" cried I, in wrathful tones.

"Never! never!" cried Jack. "She's mine, and she shall be mine."

"Damn it, man! are you crazy? How many wives do you propose to have?"
"She shall be mine!" cried Jack. "She, and no other. I give up all others. They may all go and be hanged. She, and she alone, shall be mine."

Saying this, he strode toward the door, opened it, passed through, and hanged it behind him. I heard his heavy footsteps as he went off, and I stood glaring after him, all my soul on fire with indignation.

CHAPTER XXIII.


So Jack left, and so I stood staring after him in furious indignation.

"By Jove!" I exclaimed, addressing my own honorable self, "are you going to stand that sort of thing, Macrorie? And at your time of life, my boy! You, twenty-two years of age, six feet high, and with your knowledge of the world! You're not altogether an ass, are you? I think I can depend on you, my boy. You'll stand up for your rights. She's yours, old chap. Cling to her. Remember your ancestors. You'll get her, and if Jack chooses to make a fool of himself, let him!"

After this expression of opinion, I replaced my last pipe and tumbler, and resumed my seat. Over my head the clouds rolled; through my brain penetrated the gentle influence, bringing tranquillity and peace; bringing also wisdom, and the power of planning and of resolving.

My reflections made me feel that Nora must be mine. She seemed dearer than all the world, and all that. Hadn't I saved her life? I had. Then that life was mine. No one else had such a claim on her as I had. Jack's absurd pretence at a claim was all confounded stuff and nonsense. I considered his attitude on this occasion a piece of the worst kind of selfishness, not to speak of its utter madness. The dog in the manger was nothing to this. I was not the man to let myself be pushed aside in this way. He would not have thought of her if I had not put in my claim. Before that she was no more to him than "Number Three," one of his tormentors from whom he longed to get free, one who annoyed him with letters. All this he had confessed to me. Yet the moment that I told him my story, and informed him of her identity with the Lady of the Ice, at once he changed about, and declared he would never give her up.

All of which reminded me forcibly of the language of a venerable female friend, who used to hold up her hands and exclaim, "Oh, dear! Oh, my! Oh, the corruption of the human heart! Oh, dear! Oh, my!"

On the other hand, I was not so blind but that I could see that Jack's impudent and ridiculous claim to Miss O'Halloran had made her appear in a somewhat different light from that in which I had hitherto viewed her. Until that time I had no well-defined notions. My mind vibrated between her image and that of Marion. But now Miss O'Halloran suddenly became all in all to me. Jack's claim on her made me fully conscious of my superior claim, and this I determined to enforce at all hazards. And thus the one end, aim, and purpose of my life, suddenly and almost instantaneously darted up within me, and referred to making Miss O'Halloran my own.

But, if this was to be done, I saw that it
must be done quickly. Jack's blood was up. He had declared that he would win her, and had departed with this declaration. I knew him well enough to feel sure that his action would be prompt. He was capable of any act of folly or of desperation. If I could hope to contend successfully against him, it would be necessary for me to be as foolish and as desperate. I must go in for a headlong game. It was to be a regular steeple-chase. No dilly-dallying—no shuffling—no coquetting—no wooing—but bold, instant, and immediate action. And why not? Our intercourse on the ice had been less than a day, but those hours were protracted singly to the duration of years, and we had been forced into intimacy by the peril of our path and the horror of our way. We were beaten together by the tempest, rocked by the ice, we sank together in the wave, together we crossed the tottering ice-ridge—together we evaded the fall of avalanches. Again and again, on that one unparalleled journey, she had received her life from me. Was all this to count for nothing? This! Why, this was every thing. What could her recollections of Jack be when compared to her recollections of me? For one who came to her as I had come there need be no delay. Enough to tell her what my feelings were—to urge and implore her for immediate acceptance of my vows. This was my fixed resolve; but when, where, and how? I could not go to the house again for two days, and, during two days, Jack would have the advantage. No doubt he would at once reply to that last letter of hers. No doubt he would fling away every thought but the one thought of her. No doubt he would write her a letter full of protestations of love, and implore her, for the last time, to fly with him. He had done so before. In his new mood he might do it again. The thought made my blood run cold. The more I dwelt upon it, the more confident I was that Jack would do this.

And what could I do?

One of two ways could be adopted:

First, I might go there on the following day, and call on Miss O'Halloran. Her father would be away.

And, secondly, I might write her a letter. But neither of these plans seemed satisfactory. In the first place, I did not feel altogether prepared to go and call on her for such a purpose. It came on a fellow too suddenly. In the second place, a letter did not seem to be the proper style of thing. The fact is, when a fellow seeks a lady, he ought to do it face to face, if possible.

The more I thought of it, the more strongly I felt the absolute necessity of waiting for those two days which should intervene before I could go. Then I might go on a regular invitation. Then I might have an additional opportunity of finding out her sentiments toward me. In fact, I concluded to wait.

And so I waited.

The two days passed slowly. Jack, of course, kept aloof, and I saw nothing and heard nothing of him. Where he was, or what he was doing, I could not tell. I could only conjecture. And all my conjectures led to the fixed conviction that Jack in his desperation had written to her, and proposed flight.

This conviction became intensified more and more every hour. I grew more and more impatient. My mood became one of constant and incessant fidgetiness, nervousness, and harrowing suspense.
CHAPTER XXIV.


At last the appointed evening came, and I prepared to go to O'Halloran's. By this time I was roused up to a pitch of excitement such as I had never before experienced. For two days and two nights I had been brooding and dreaming over this one subject, imagining all sorts of things, making all sorts of conjectures about Jack's letter and Miss O'Halloran's reception of it. Was it possible that she could share his madness and his desperation? That I could not tell. Women in love, and men in love also, will always act madly and desperately. But was she in love? Could that serene, laughing, merry, happy face belong to one who was capable of a sudden act of desperation—of one who would sit with Jack, and fling her father into sorrow at a moment's warning? How could that be? So by turns my hopes and my fears rose in the ascendant, and the end of it all was that, by the time I reached O'Halloran's door, Jack himself, in his most frantic mood, could not have been more perfectly given up to any headlong piece of rashness, folly, and desperation, than I was.

I knocked at the door.

I was admitted, and shown into the room. O'Halloran, I was told, had just arrived, and was dressing. Would I be kind enough to wait?

I sat down.

In about two minutes I heard a light footstep.

My heart beat fast.

Some one was coming.

Who?

The light footstep and the rustling dress showed that it was a lady.

But who?

Was it the servant?

Or Marion?

Was it Nora?

My heart actually stood still as these possibilities suggested themselves, and I sat glaring at the door.

The figure entered.

My heart gave a wild bound; the blood surged to my face, and boiled in my veins. It was Nora's self! It was—it was—my Nora!

I rose as she entered. She greeted me with her usual beaming and fascinating smile. I took her hand, and did not say a word for a few moments. The hour had come. I was struggling to speak. Here she was. This was the opportunity for which I had longed. But what should I say?

"I've been longing to see you alone," I cried, at last. "Have you forgotten that day on the ice? Have you forgotten the eternal hours of that day? Do you remember how you clung to me as we crossed the ice-ridge, while the waves were surging behind us, and the great ice-heaps came crashing down? Do you remember how I raised you up as you fell lifeless, and carried your senseless form, springing over the open channel, and dashing up the cliff? And I lost you, and now I've found you again!"

I stopped, and looked at her earnestly, to see how she received my words.

And here let me confess that such a
mode of address was not generous or chivalrous, nor was it at all in good taste. True chivalry would have scorned to remind another of an obligation conferred; but then, you see, this was a very peculiar case. In love, my boy, all the ordinary rules of life, and that sort of thing, you know, must give way to the exigencies of the hour. And this was a moment of dire exigency, in which much had to be said in the most energetic manner. Besides, I spoke what I thought, and that’s my chief excuse after all.

I stopped and looked at her; but, as I looked, I did not feel reason to be satisfied with my success so far. She retreated a step, and tried to withdraw her hand. She looked at me with a face of perplexity and despair. Seeing this, I let go her hand. She clasped both hands together, and looked at me in silence.

"What!" said I, tragically, yet sincerely—for a great, dark, bitter disappointment rose up within me—"what! Is all this nothing? Has it all been nothing to you? Alas! what else could I expect? I might have known it all. No. You never thought of me. You could not. I was less than the driver to you. If you had thought of me, you never would have run away and left me when I was wandering over the country thinking only of you, with all my heart yearning after you, and seeking only for some help to send you. And yet there was that in our journey which might at least have elicited from you some word of sympathy."

There again, my friend, I was ungenerous, unchivalrous, and all that. Bad enough is it to remind one of favors done; but, on the heels of that, to go deliberately to work and reproach one for want of gratitude, is ten times worse. By Jove! And for this, as for the other, my only excuse is the exigencies of the hour.

Meanwhile she stood with an increasing perplexity and grief in every look and gesture. She cast at me a look of utter despair. She wrung her hands; and at last, as I ended, she exclaimed:

"Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? Oh, dear! Oh, what a dreadful, dreadful thing! Oh, dear!"

Her evident distress touched me to the heart. Evidently, she was compromised with Jack, and was embarrassed by this.

"Follow your own heart," said I, mournfully. "But say—can you not give me some hope? Can you not give me one kind word?"

"Oh, dear!" she cried; "it’s dreadful. I don’t know what to do. It’s all a mistake. Oh, I wish you could only know all! And me!! What in the world can I do!"

"Oh, Miss O’Halloran!" said I; "I love you—I adore—you—and—oh, Miss O’Halloran!—I—"

"Miss O’Halloran!" she cried, starting back as I advanced once more, and tried to take her hand.

"Nora, then," said I. "Dearest, sweetest! You cannot be indifferent. Oh, Nora!" and I grasped her hand.

But at that moment I was startled by a heavy footstep at the door. I dropped Nora’s hand, which she herself snatched away, and turned.

It was O’Halloran!!!!!

He stood for a moment looking at us, and then he burst out into a roar of laughter.

"Macrorie!" he cried—"Macrorie! May the divil saize me if I don’t beleive that ye’re indulgin’ in gallanthries." Now, at that moment, his laughter sounded harsh and ominous; but I had done no
wrong, and so, in conscious innocence, I said:

"Mr. O'Halloran, you are right in your conjecture; but I assure you that it was no mere gallantry; for, sir, I have a strong affection for Miss O'Halloran, and have just asked her for her hand."

"Miss O'Halloran!" cried he. "Miss O'Halloran! Sure, why didn't ye ask her-silf, thin, like a man?"

"Oh, dear!" cried Nora, taking O'Halloran's arm, and turning her beautiful, pleading face up to his—"oh, dear! It's all a dreadful, dreadful mistake. He doesn't know who I am. He thinks that I am Miss O'Halloran."

"You!" I cried. "You! Why, are you not? Of course, you are. Who else are you?"

"Oh, tell him, tell him!" cried Nora. "It's so dreadful! Such a horrid, horrid mistake to make!"

A bright light flashed all over O'Halloran's face. He looked at me, and then at Nora; and then there came forth a peal of laughter which would have done honor to any of the gods at the Olympian table. This time the laughter was pure, and fresh, and joyous, and free.

"Miss O'Halloran!" he cried—"ha, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran! ha, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran! Oh, be the powers, it's me that'll nivir get over that same! Miss O'Halloran! An' givin' wee to sintimint—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! an' askin' for ricprococcece av' tindir attachmint—ha, ha, ha, ha! What in the woide wurruld ivir injued ye to think that me own little Nora was Miss O'Halloran?"

"Miss O'Halloran? Why," said I, "what else could I suppose? I recollect now, when you introduced me the other night, you didn't mention her name; and, if she isn't Miss O'Halloran, who is she?"

Let me know now, at least. But my sentiments remain the same," I concluded, "whatever name she has."

"The divull they do!" said O'Halloran, with a grin. "Well, thin, the quicker ye choence yer sintimints, the betther. Me own Nora—she's not Miss O'Halloran—an' lucky for me—she's somethin' betther—she's—MRS. O'HALLORAN!!"

Let the curtain fall. There, reader, you have it. We won't attempt to enlarge—will we? We'll omit the exploding thunder-bolt—won't we? I will quietly put an end to this chapter, so as to give you leisure to meditate over the woes of Macorrie.

CHAPTER XXV.

RECOVERY FROM THE LAST GREAT SHOCK.—GENIALITY OF MINE HOST.—OFF AGAIN AMONG ANTIQUITIES.—THE FENIANS.—A STARTLING REVELATION BY ONE OF THE INNER CIRCLE.—POLITICS, POETRY, AND PATHOS.—FAR-REACHING PLANS AND DEEP-SEATED PURPOSES.

I was to dine with O'Halloran, and, though for some time I was overwhelmed, yet I rallied rapidly, and soon recovered. O'Halloran himself was full of fun. The event had apparently only excited his laughter, and appeared to him as affording material for nothing else than endless chaff and nonsense.

As for Nora, she had been so agitated that she did not come to dinner, nor did Marion make her appearance. This was the only thing that gave me discomfort. O'Halloran seemed to understand how natural my mistake was, and I supposed that he made every allowance, and all that.

We sat at table for a long time. O'Halloran discoursed on his usual variety of sub-
jests. Something occurred which suggested the Fenians, whereupon he suddenly stopped; and, looking earnestly at me, he said:

"Ye know I'm a Fenian?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I make no saucery of it," said he. "As a British officer, you're my mortal inimie in my capacesce as a Fenian; but at this table, and in this house, we're nayther one thing nor the other. You're only Macrorie, and I'm only O'Halloran. Still I don't mind talking of the subject of Fenianism; it's an important one, and will one day take up a great space in history. I don't intend to indulge in any offensive obgurjeoctons ageenst the Saxon, nor will I mention the wrongs of Oireland. I'll only enlighten you as to the purpose, the maining, and the arthhood of the Fenian orderer."

With these words he rose from the table, and chatted on general subjects, while the servants brought in the spoons, glasses, tumblers, and several other things. Beneath the genial influence of these, O'Halloran soon grew eloquent, and resumed his remarks on the Fenians.

"The Fenian orderer," he began, "has two eems. One is abroad; the other is at home.

"The first is that which is kipt before the oyes of the members of the outer cir- cles. It manes the libereoction of Oireland, and perpitical inimity to England. This pur- pose has its maneeestoection in the attacks which have alriddy been made on the ini- my. Two invessions have been made on Canada. Innumerable and multeefierious small interpoises have been set on fut in Oireland and in England; and these things serve the purpose of keeping before the moinds of the members the prospecit of some grand attack on the ini- my, and of foinin' their ardhor.

"But there is an innermost circle, say- cludhid from the vulgar oii, undher the chootelear prayminence of min of janius, in whose moinds there is a very different eem. It is the second which I have mentioned. It is diricetly against America.

"Thus—

"In the American raypublic there are seme millions of Oirish voters. Now, if these seme millions cud only be unoited in one homojeonous congressoction, for some one prayminent object, they cud aisly rule the countree, an' diricet its policee inteirely, at home and abroad.

"This, thin, is the thre and genuine eem of the shuparior min of the intyorior cir- cles. It is a grand an' comprayhinsive schayme to consoleacte all the Oirish votes into one overwhilling mass which can contrrol all the ilissions. It is sweed by a few min of pryssoids moinds and shupayrior janius.

"And hince you bayhowld a systeem rais- ing within the boosom of the American ray- public, which will soon be greather thin the raypublic itself. At prisnt, though, we do not number much over a million. But we are incrasying. We have hoighly-multifierious raysourcis. All the hilpe are in our pee. These are our spoys. They in- furrm us all of the saycrit doings of the American payple. They bring constinnt accisions to our numbers. They meek us sure of our future.

"Oirishmin," he continued, "will nivir roise ifikceceoules in Oireland. They can only roise in Amirica. Here, in this coun- trhy, is their only chance. And this chance we have sayzed, an', begorra, we'll follow it up till all Amirica is domeeneetid by the Oirish illmint, and ruled by Oirish votes. This is the only Oirish raypublic for which we care."

"But you've been divided in your coun
"He suddenly stopped; and, looking earnestly at me, he said: 'Ye know 'm a Fenian?'"—page 86.
At the America the land of vingince there We'll then in across the ecm the America said thricks intindid to disave and schtoopeey the Amirican and English governmints. "So your true aim refers to America?" "Yis. And we intind to saycure to Amirica a perpetual succession of Oirish prisdints." "When will you be able to begin? At the next election?"

"No—not so soon. Not for two or three to come. By the third election though, all the Oirish populatation will be riddy to vote, and thin we'll have our own Oirish Prisidint. And ather that," said O'Halloran, in an oracular tone, and pausing to quaff the transparent draught—"ather that, Amirica will be simple an Oirish republic. Then we'll cast our oys across the say. We'll cast there our arrums. We'll sind there our flates and armies. We'll take vingince out of the Saxon for the wrongs of foive cinturies. We'll adopt Ould Oirland into the famecloe of the Steetes, as the youngest, but the fairst and the brightist of thin all. We'll throw our laygions across the Oirish Channel into the land of the Saxon, and bring that countrhy down to its proumaryl insignificance. That," said O'Halloran, "is the one schtoopindous eem of the Fenian Ordher."

O'Halloran showed deep emotion. Once more he quaffed the restoring draught. "Yis, me boy," he said, looking tenderly at me. "I'll yt return to the owld land. Perhaps ye'll visit the eged O'Halloran before he doise. Oi'll teek up me residence at Dublin. Oi'll show ye Oirland—free—tromphant, shuprame among the nections. Oi'll show ye our noble pisintry, the foinist

in the wurruld. Oi'll take ye to the Rotondo. Oi'll show ye the Blarney-stone. Oi'll show ye the ruins of Tara, where me own ancestors once reigned."

At this his emotion overcame him, and he was once more obliged to seek a restorative. After this he volunteered to sing a song, and trolled off the following to a lively, rollicking air:

"Ye choonful Noile!
Yo nymphs devoine,
Shuprame in Jove's dominions!
Assist me loye,
Whoole of aspoire
To cilbrect the Fenians.

"Our ordher bowld
All onconthrowled
Injued with power, be dad, is
To pleece in arrums
The stalwart arrums
Of half a million Paddies.

"To Saxon laws
For Oireland's cause
Thim same did break allaygageance,
An' marched away
In war's array
To froghten the Canajians.

"We soon intind
Our wee to wind
Across the wode Atlantic,
Bessage the ports,
Blow up the forts,
An' drove the Saxon frantic.

"An' thin in loine,
Our hosts will join
Beneath the Oirish pinnint,
Till Dublin falls,
An' on its walls
We hang the lord-liftimint.

"The Saxon crew
We'll thin pursboo
Judiciously and calmly—
On Windsor's plain
We'll hang the Quane
An' all the royal family.
"'An' thin—begob!
No more they'll rob
Ould Oireland of her taxes,
An' Earth shall rowl
From powl to powl!
More alse on its axis.'"

Now all the time O'Halloran was talking and singing, I had scarcely heard a word that he said. Once I caught the general run of his remarks, and said a few words to make him think I was attending; but my thoughts soon wandered off, and I was quite unconscious that he was talking rank treason. How do I know so much about it now, it may be asked. To this I reply that after-circumstances gave me full information about was said and sung. And of this the above will give a general idea.

But my thoughts were on other subjects than Fenianism. It was the Lady of the Ice that filled my heart and my mind. Lost and found, and lost again! With me it was nothing but—"O Nora! Nora! Wherefore art thou, Nora?"—and all that sort of thing, you know.

Lost and found! Lost and found! A capital title for a sensation novel, but a bad thing, my boy, to be ringing through a poor devil's brain. Now, through my brain there rang that identical refrain, and nothing else. And all my thoughts and words the melancholy burden bore of never—never more. How could I enjoy the occasion? What was conviviality to me, or I to conviviality? O'Halloran's words were unheeded and unheard. While Nora was near, he used to seem a brilliant being, but Nora was gone!

And why had she gone? Why had she been so cut up? I had said but little, and my mistake had been hushed up by O'Halloran's laughter. Why had she retired? And why, when I spoke to her of my love, had she showed such extraordinary agita-

tion? Was it—oh, was it that she too loved, not wisely but too well? O Nora! Oh, my Lady of the Ice! Well did you say it was a dreadful mistake! Oh, mistake—irreparable, despairing! And could I never see her sweet face again?

By this, which is a pretty fair specimen of my thoughts, it will be plainly seen that I was in a very agitated frame of mind, and still clung as fondly and as frantically as ever to my one idea of the Lady of the Ice.

One thing came amid my thoughts like a flash of light into darkness, and that was that Jack, at least, was not crossing my path, nor was he a dog in my manger; Miss O'Halloran might be his, but she was nothing to me. Who Miss O'Halloran was, I now fully understood. It was Marion—Marion with the sombre, sad face, and the piercing, lustrous eyes.

Well, be she who she might, she was no longer standing between Jack and me. I could regain my lost friend at any rate. I could explain every thing to him. I could easily anticipate the wild shrieks of laughter with which he would greet my mistake, but that mattered not. I was determined to hunt him up. All my late bitter feeling against him vanished, and I began to feel a kind of longing for his great broad brow, his boyish carelessness, his never-ending blunders. So at an early hour I rose, and informed O'Halloran that I had an engagement at eleven o'clock, and would have to start.

"It's sorry I am," said he, "but I won't deetne ye."
CHAPTER XXVI.

A FEW PARTING WORDS WITH O'HALLORAN.—

His touching parental tenderness, high chivalric sentiment, and lofty sense of honor.—Pistols for two.—Pleasant and harmonious arrangement.—"Me boy, ye're an honor to yer sex!"

"It's sorry I am," said O'Halloran, "but I won't deteen ye, for I always rispect an engeegemint."

He stopped and looked at me with a benevolent smile. I had risen from my chair, and was standing before him.

"Sit down a momint," said he. "There's a subjekt I wish to mition, the consideerezction of which I've postponed till now."

I resumed my seat in some surprise.

"Me boy," said he, in a tender and paternal voice, "it's now toime for me to speak to ye about the ayvint of which I was a casual witniss. I refer to your addharrison to me woife. Don't inerrupt me. I comprayhind the whole matter. The leadies are all fond of ye. So they are of me. Ye're a divril of a fellow with them—an' so am I. We comprayhind one another. You see we must have a mayting."

"A meeting!"

"Yis—of course. A jool. There's nothing else to be done."

"You understand," said I, "of course, the nature of my awkward mistake, and the cause of it."

"Don't mition it. Me ondherstand? Of course. Am I an owl? Be dad, I nivir laughed so much these tin years. Ondherstand! Every bit of it. But we won't have any expleeneetzions about that. What concerns us is the code of honor, and the jewty of gentlemin. A rigid sinse of honor, and a shuprame regyrd for the sancteties of life, require that any voizelction, howivir ointentional, be submitted and subjekted to the only tribunal of chivalry—the emicient and maydoayval orjil of the jool."

I confess I was affented, and deeply, by the lofty attitude which O'Halloran assumed. He hadn't the slightest hard feeling toward me. He wasn't in the smallest degree jealousy.

He was simply a calm adherent to a lofty and chivalrous code. His honor had been touched ignorantly, no doubt—yet still it had been touched, and he saw no other course to follow than the one laid down by chivalry.

"My friend," said I, enthusiastically, "I appreciate your delicacy, and your lofty sentiment. This is true chivalry. You surpass yourself. You are sublime!"

"I know I am," said O'Halloran, naively.

A tear trembled in his eye. He did not seek to conceal his generous emotion. That tear rolled over and dropped into his tumbler, and hallowed the draught therein.

"So then," said I, "we are to have a meeting—but where, and when?"

"Whivir it shoots you, and whervir. I'm afraid it'll take you out of your wee. We'll have to go off about twinty molles. There's a moightly convenient place there, I'm sorry it's not nayer, but it can't be helped. I've had three or fourer maytings there mesil this last year. You'll be deighted with it whin you once get there. There's good whiskey there too. The best in the country. We'll go there."

"And when?"

"Well, well—the second may areenge about that. How'll nixt Monday do?"

"Delightfully, if it suits you."

"Oh, I'll be shoted at any toime."

"What shall we meet with?" I asked.

"Sure that's for you to decoide."

"Pistols," I suggested.
O’Halloran nodded.

“I really have no preference. I'll leave it to you if you like,” said I.

O’Halloran rose—a benevolent smile illumined his face. He pressed my hand.

“Me boy,” said he, with the same paternal tone which he had thus far maintained, “don’t mention it. Ah! but will do. We'll say pistols. Me boy, ye're as th real as steel—” He paused, and then wringing my hand, he said in a voice tremulous with emotion—“Me boy, ye're an honor to yer sex!”

CHAPTER XXVII.


As I left the house there came a blast of stinging sleet, which showed me that it was a wild night. It was not many days now since that memorable journey on the river; and the storm that was blowing seemed to be the counterpart and continuation of that. It had been overcast when I entered O’Halloran’s; when I left it, the storm had gathered up into fury, and the wind howled around, and the furious sleet dashed itself fiercely against me. The street was deserted. None would go out on so wild a night. It was after eleven; half-past, perhaps.

For a moment I turned my back to the sleet, and then drew forth my cloud from my pocket, and bound it about my head. Thus prepared, and thus armed, I was ready to encounter the fiercest sleet that ever blew. I went down the steps, took the sidewalk, and went off.

As I went on, my mind was filled with many thoughts. A duel was before me; but I gave that no consideration. The storm howled about and shrieked between the houses; but the storm was nothing. There was that in my heart and in my brain which made all these things trivial. It was the image of my Lady of the Ice, and the great longing after her, which, for the past few days, had steadily increased.

I had found her! I had lost her! Lost and found! Found and lost!

The wrath of the storm had only this one effect on me, that it brought before me with greater vividness the events of that memorable day on the river. Through such a storm we had forced our way. From such pitiless peltings of stinging sleet I had sheltered her fainting, drooping head. This was the hurricane that had howled about her as she lay prostrate, upheld in my arms, which hurled its wrathful showers on her white, upturned face. From this I had saved her, and from worse—from the grinding ice, the falling avalanche, the dark, deep, cold, freezing flood. I had brought her back to life through all these perils, and now—and now!—

Now, for that Lady of the Ice, whose image was brought up before me by the tempest and the storm, there arose within me a mighty and irrepressible yearning. She had become identified with Nora, but yet it was not Nora’s face and Nora’s image that dwelt within my mind. That smiling face, with its sparkling eyes and its witching smile, was another thing, and seemed to belong to another person. It was not Nora herself whom I had loved, but Nora as she
stood the representative of my Lady of the Ice. Moreover, I had seen Nora in unfeigned distress; I had seen her wringing her hands and looking at me with piteous entreaty and despair; but even the power of these strong emotions had not given her the face that haunted me. Nora on the Ice and Nora at home were so different, that they could not harmonize; nor could the never-to-be-forgotten lineaments of the one be traced in the other. And, could Nora now have been with me in this storm, I doubted whether her face could again assume that marble, statuesque beauty—that immortal sadness and despair, which I had once seen upon it. That face—the true face that I loved—could I ever see it again?

I breasted the storm and walked on I knew not where. At last I found myself on the Esplanade. Beneath lay the river, which could not now be seen through the blackness of the storm and of the night, but which, through that blackness, sent forth a voice from all its waves. And the wind wailed mournfully, mingling its voice with that of the river. So once before had rushing, dashing water joined its uproar to the howl of pitiless winds, when I bore her over the river; only on that occasion there was joined in the horrid chorus the more fearful boom of the breaking icefields.

And now the voice of the river only increased and intensified that longing of which I have spoken. I could not go home. I thought of going back again to O'Halloran's house. There was my Lady of the Ice—Nora. I might see her shadow on the window—I might see a light from her room.

Now Nora had not at all come up to my ideal of the Lady of the Ice, and yet there was no other representative. I might be mad in love with an image, a shadow, an idea; but if that image existed anywhere in real life, it could exist only in Nora. And thus Nora gained from my image an attractiveness, which she never could have had in her own right. It was her identity with that haunting image of loveliness that gave her such a charm. The charm was an imaginary one. Had I never found her on the river and idealized her, she might have gained my admiration; but she would never have thrown over me such a spell. But now, whatever she was in herself, she was so merged in that ideal, that in my longing for my love I turned my steps backward and wandered toward O'Halloran's, with the frantic hope of seeing her shadow on the window, or a ray of light from her room. For I could find no other way than this of satisfying those insatiable longings that had sprung up within me.

So back I went through the storm, which seemed still to increase in fury, and through the sleet, which swept in long horizontal lines down the street, and whirled round the corner, and froze fast to the houses. As I went on, the violence of the storm did not at all weaken my purpose. I had my one idea, and that one idea I was bent on carrying out.

Under such circumstances I approached the house of O'Halloran. I don't know what I expected, or whether I expected anything or not. I know what I wanted. I wanted the Lady of the Ice, and in search of her I had thus wandered back to that house in which lived the one with whom she had been identified. A vague idea of seeing her shadow on the window still possessed me, and so I kept along on the opposite sidewalk, and looked up to see if there was any light or any shadow.

There was no light at all.
I stood still and gazed.

Was there a shadow? Or what was it? There was something moving there—a dark, dusky shadow, in a niche of the gateway, by the corner of the house—a dark shadow, dimly revealed in this gloom—the shadowy outline of a woman's form.

I do not know what mad idea possessed me. I looked, while my heart beat fast and painfully. A wild idea of the Lady of the Ice coming to me again, amid the storm, to be again my companion through the storm, flashed like lightning through my brain.

Suddenly, wild and clear and clanging, there came the toll of a bell from a neighboring tower, as it began to strike the hour of midnight. For a moment I paused in a sort of superstitious terror, and then, before the third stroke had rung out, I rushed across the street.

The figure had been watching me.

As I came, she started. She hurried forward, and met me at the curb. With a wild rush of joy and exultation, I caught her in my arms. I felt her frame tremble. At length she disengaged herself and caught my arm with a convulsive clasp, and drew me away. Mechanically, and with no fixed idea of any kind, I walked off.

She walked slowly. In that fierce gale, rapid progress was not possible. She, however, was well protected from the blast. A cloud was wrapped around her head, and kept her face from the storm.

We walked on, and I felt my heart throb to suffocation, while my brain reeled with a thousand new and wild fancies. Amid these, something of my late superstition still lingered.

"Who is she?" I wondered; "Who is she? How did she happen to wait for me here? Is it my Lady of the Ice? Am I a haunted man? Will she always thus come to me in the storm, and leave me when the storm is over? Where am I going? Whither is she leading me? Is she taking me back to the dark river from which I saved her?"

Then I struggled against the superstitious fancy, and rallied and tried to think calmly about it."

"Yes. It's Nora," I thought; "it's herself. She loves me. This was the cause of her distress. And that distress has mastered her. She has been unable to endure my departure. She has been convinced that I would return, and has waited for me.

"Nora! Yes, Nora! Nora! But, Nora! what is this that I am doing? This Nora can never be mine. She belongs to another. She was mine only through my mistake. How can she hope to be mine, or how can I hope to be hers? And why is it that I can dare thus to take her to ruin? Can I have the heart to?"

I paused involuntarily, as the full horror of this idea burst upon me. For, divested of all sentiment, the bald idea that burst upon my whirling brain was simply this, that I was running away with the wife of another man, and that man the very one who had lately given me his hospitality, and called me his friend. And even so whirling a brain as mine then was, could not avoid being penetrated by an idea that was so shocking to every sentiment of honor, and loyalty, and chivalry, and duty.

But as I paused, my companion forced me on. She had not said a single word. Her head was bent down to meet the storm. She walked like one bent on some desperate purpose, and that purpose was manifestly too strong and too absorbing to be checked by any thing so feeble as my fitful and uncertain irresolution. She
"I took the cloud which was wrapped around her head, and tenderly and delicately drew it down from her face. Oh, Heavens! what was this that I saw?"—page 93
walked on like some fate that had gained possession of me. I surrendered to the power that thus held me. I ceased even to think of pausing.

At length we came to where there was a large house with lights streaming from all the windows. It was Colonel Berton's—I knew it well. A ball had been going on, and the guests were departing. Down came the sleighs as they carried off the guests, the jangle of the bells sounding shrilly in the stormy night. Thus far in my wanderings all had been still, and this sudden noise produced a startling effect.

One sleigh was still at the door, and as we approached nearer we could see that none others were there. It was probably waiting for the last guest. At length we reached the house, and were walking immediately under the bright light of the drawing-room windows, when suddenly the door of the house opened, and a familiar voice sounded, speaking in loud, eager, hilarious tones.

At the sound of that voice my companion stopped, and staggered back, and then stood rigid with her head thrust forward.

It was Jack's voice.

"Thanks," he said. "Ha! ha! ha! You're awfully kind, you know. Oh, yes. I'll be here to-morrow night. Good-by. Good-by."

He rushed down the steps. The door closed. He sprang into the sleigh. It started ahead in an opposite direction, and away it went, till the jangle of the bells died out in the distance, amid the storm.

All was still. The street was deserted. The storm had full possession. The lights of the house flashed out upon the snow-drifts, and upon the glittering, frozen sleet.

For a moment my companion stood rooted to the spot. Then snatching her arm from mine, she flung up her hand with a sudden gesture, and tore my cloud down from off my face. The lights from the windows shone upon me, revealing my features to her.

The next instant her arms fell. She staggered back, and with a low moan of heart-broken anguish, she sank down prostrate into the snow.

Now hitherto there had been on my mind a current of superstitious feeling which had animated most of my wild fancies. It had been heightened by the events of my wanderings. The howl of the storm, the voice of the dark river, the clangor of the midnight bell, the shadowy figure at the doorway—all these circumstances had combined to stimulate my imagination and disorder my brain. But now, on my arrival at this house, these feelings had passed away. These signs of commonplace life—the jangling sleigh-bells, the lighted windows, the departing company—had roused me, and brought me to myself. Finally, there came the sound of Jack's voice, hearty, robust, healthy, strong—at the sound of which the dark shadows of my mind were dispelled. And it was at this moment, when all these phantasms had vanished, that my companion fell senseless in the snow at my feet.

I stooped down full of wonder, and full too of pity. I raised her in my arms. I supported her head on my shoulder. The storm beat pitilessly; the stinging sleet pelted my now uncovered face; the lights of the house shone out upon the form of my companion. All the street was deserted. No one in the house saw us. I, for my part, did not think whether I was seen or not. All my thoughts were turned to the one whom I held in my arms.

I took the cloud which was wrapped around her head, and tenderly and delicately drew it down from her face.
Oh, Heavens! what was this that I saw? The lights flashed out, and revealed it unmistakably. There—then—resting on my shoulder—under my gaze—now fully revealed—there lay the face that had haunted me—the face for which I had longed, and yearned, and craved! There it lay—that never-to-be-forgotten face—with the marble features, the white lips, the closed eyes, the stony calm—there it lay—the face of her whom alone I loved—the Lady of the Ice!

What was this? I felt my old mood returning. Was this real? Was it not a vision? How was it that she came to me again through the storm, again to sink down, and again to rest her senseless form in my arms, and her head upon my breast?

For a few moments I looked at her in utter bewilderment. All the wild fancies which I had just been having now came back. I had wandered through the storm in search of her, and she had come. Here she was—here, in my arms!

Around us the storm raged as once before; and again, as before, the fierce sleet dashed upon that white face; and again, as before, I shielded it from its fury.

As I looked upon her I could now recognize her fully and plainly; and at that recognition the last vestige of my wild, superstitious feeling died out utterly. For she whom I held in my arms was no phantom, nor was she Nora. I had been in some way intentionally deceived, but all the time my own instinct had been true; for, now, when the Lady of the Ice again lay in my arms, I recognized her, and I saw that she was no other than Marion.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MY LADY OF THE ICE.—SNOW AND SLEET,—REAWAKENING.—A DESPERATE SITUATION,—SAVED A SECOND TIME.—SNATCHED FROM A WORSE FATE.—BORN IN MY ARMS ONCE MORE.—THE OPEN DOOR.

So there she lay before me—the Lady of the Ice, discovered at last, and identified with Marion. And she lay there reclining on my arms as once before, and in the snow, with the pitiless blast beating upon her. And the first question that arose was, "What can I do?"

Ay—that was the question. What could I do?

I leave to the reader to try and imagine the unparalleled embarrassment of such a situation. For there was I, in an agony of eagerness to save her—to do something—and yet it was simply impossible to think of any one place to which I could take her.

Could I take her into Colonel Berton's? That was my first impulse. The lights from his windows were flashing brightly out into the gloom close beside us. But how could I take her there? With what story? Or if I trumped up some story—which I easily could do—would she not betray herself by her own incoherencies as she recovered from her faint? No, not Colonel Berton's. Where, then? Could I take her anywhere? To an hotel? No. To any friends? Certainly not. To her own home?—But she had fled, and it was locked against her. Where—where could I take her?

For I had to do something. I could not let her lie here—she would perish. I had to take her somewhere, and yet save her from that ruin and shame to which her rashness and Jack's perfidy had exposed
her. Too plain it all seemed now. Jack had urged her to fly—beyond a doubt—she had consented, and he had not come for her.

I raised her up in my arms, and carried her on. Once before I had thus carried her in my arms—thus, as I saved her from death; and now, as I bore her, I felt that I was trying to save her from a fate far worse—from scandal, from evil speaking—from a dishonored name—from a father's curse. And could I but save her from this—could I but bear her a second time from this darker fate back to light, and life, and safety; then I felt assured that my Lady of the Ice could not so soon forget this second service.

I raised her up and carried her thus I knew not where. There was not a soul in the streets. The lamps gave but a feeble light in the wild storm. The beating of the sleet and the howling of the tempest increased at every step. My lady was senseless in my arms. I did not know where I was going, nor where I could go; but breasted the storm, and shielded my burden from it as well as I could; and so toiled on, in utter bewilderment and desperation.

Now I beg leave to ask the reader if this situation of mine was not as embarrassing a one as any that he ever heard of. For I thus found forced upon me the safety, the honor, and the life of the very Lady of the Ice for whom I had already risked my life—whose life I had already saved; and about whom I had been raving ever since. But now that she had thus been thrown upon me, with her life, and her honor, it was an utterly impossible thing to see how I could extricate her from this frightful difficulty; though so fervent was my longing to do this, that, if my life could have done it, I would have laid it down for her on the spot.

At last, to my inexpressible relief, I heard from her a low moan. I put her down on the door-step of a house close by, and sat by her side supporting her. A lamp was burning not far away.

She drew a long breath, and then raised herself suddenly, and looked all around. Gradually the truth of her position returned to her. She drew herself away from me, and buried her face in her hands, and sat in silence for a long time. I waited in patience and anxiety for her to speak, and feared that the excitement and the anguish which she had undergone might have affected her mind.

Suddenly she started, and looked at me with staring eyes.
"Did he send you?" she gasped, in a strange, hoarse, choking voice.
Her face, her tone, and the emphasis of her words, all showed the full nature of the dark suspicion that had flung itself over her mind.
"He! Me!" I cried, indignantly.
"Never! never! Can you have the heart to suspect me? Have I deserved this?"
"It looks like it," said she, coldly.
"Oh, listen!" I cried; "listen! I will explain my coming. It was a mistake, an accident. I swear to you, ever since that day on the ice, I've been haunted by your face—"

She made an impatient gesture.
"Well, not your face, then. I did not know it was yours. I called it the Lady of the Ice."
"I do not care to hear," said she, coldly.
"Oh, listen!" I said. "I want to clear myself from your horrid suspicion. I was at your house this evening. After leaving, I wandered wildly about. I couldn't go home. It was half madness and superstition. I went to the Esplanade, and there seemed voices in the storm. I wandered
back again to your house, with a vague and half-crazy idea that the Lady of the Ice was calling me. As I came up to the house, I saw a shadowy figure on the other side. I thought it was the Lady of the Ice, and crossed over, not knowing what I was doing. The figure came and took my arm. I walked on, frozen into a sort of superstitious silence. I swear to you, it happened exactly in this way, and that for a time I really thought it was the Lady of the Ice who had come to meet me in the storm. I held back once or twice, but to no avail. I swear to you that I never had the remotest idea that it was you, till the moment when you fell, and I saw that you yourself were the Lady of the Ice. I did not recognize you before; but, when your face was pale, with suffering and fear upon it, then you became the same one whom I have never forgotten."

"He did not send you, then?" said she again.

"He? No. I swear he didn't; but all is just as I have said. Besides, we have quarrelled, and I have neither seen nor heard of him for two days."

She said nothing in reply, but again buried her face in her hands, and sat crouching on the door-step. The storm howled about us with tremendous fury. All the houses in the street were dark, and the street itself showed no living forms but ours. A lamp, not far off, threw a feeble light upon us.

"Come," said I at last; "I have saved you once from death, and, I doubt not, I have been sent by Fate to save you once again. If you stay here any longer, you must perish. You must rouse yourself."

I spoke vehemently and quickly, and in the tone of one who would listen to no refusal. I was roused now, at last, from all irresolution by the very sight of her suffering. I saw that to remain here much longer would be little else than death for her.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she moaned.

"Tell me of some place where I can take you."

"There is no place. How could I dare to go to any of my friends?"

"Why should you not?"

"I cannot—I cannot."

"You can easily make up some story for the occasion. Tell me the name of some one, and I will take you."

"No," said she.

"Then," said I, "you must go home."

"Home! home!" she gasped.

"Yes," said I, firmly, "home. Home you must go, and nowhere else."

"I cannot."

"You must."

"I will not; I will die first."

"You shall not die!" I cried, passionately. "You shall not die while I am near you. I have saved your life before, and I will not let it end in this. No, you shall not die—I swear by all that's holy! I myself will carry you home."

"I cannot," she murmured, feebly.

"You must," said I. "This is not a question of death—it's a question of dishonor. Home is the only haven where you can find escape from that, and to that home I will take you."

"Oh, my God!" she wailed; "how can I meet my father?"

She buried her face in her hands again, and sobbed convulsively.

"Do not be afraid," said I. "I will meet him, and explain all. Or say—answer me this," I added, in fervid, vehement tones—"I can do more than this. I will tell him it was all my doing. I will accept his anger. I'll tell him I was half mad, and repented. I'll tell any thing—anything you like. I'll shield you so that all his fury
shall fall on me, and he will have nothing for you but pity."

"Stop," said she, solemnly, rising to her feet, and looking at me with her white face—"stop! You must not talk so. I owe my life to you already. Do not overwhelm me. You have now deliberately offered to accept dishonor for my sake. It is too much. If my gratitude is worth having, I assure you I am grateful beyond words. But your offer is impossible. Never would I permit it."

"Will you go home, then?" I asked, as she paused.

"Yes," said she, slowly.

I offered my arm, and she took it, leaning heavily upon me. Our progress was slow, for the storm was fierce, and she was very weak.

"I think," said she, "that in my haste I left the back door unlocked. If so, I may get in without being observed."

"I pray Heaven it may be so," said I, "for in that case all trouble will be avoided."

We walked on a little farther. She leaned more and more heavily upon me, and walked more and more slowly. At last she stopped.

I knew what was the matter. She was utterly exhausted, and to go farther was impossible. I did not question her at all. I said nothing. I stooped, and raised her in my arms without a word, and walked vigorously onward. She murmured a few words of complaint, and struggled feebly; but I took no notice whatever of her words or her struggles. But her weakness was too great even for words. She rested on me like a dead weight, and I would have been sure that she had fainted again, had I not felt the convulsive shudders that from time to time passed through her frame, and heard her frequent heavy sighs and sobblings.

So I walked on through the roaring storm, beaten by the furious sleet, bearing my burden in my arms, as I had done once before. And it was the same burden, under the same circumstances—my Lady of the Ice, whom I thus again uplifted in my arms amid the storm, and snatched from a cruel fate, and carried back to life and safety and home. And I knew that this salvation which she now received from me was far more precious than that other one; for that was a rescue from death, but this was a rescue from dishonor.

We reached the house at last. The gate which led into the yard was not fastened. I carried her in, and put her down by the back door. I tried it. It opened. The sight of that open door gave her fresh life and strength. She put one foot on the threshold.

Then she turned,

"Oh, sir," said she, in a low, thrilling voice, "I pray God that it may ever be in my power to do something for you—some day—in return—for all this. God bless you! you have saved me—"

And with these words she entered the house. The door closed between us—she was gone.

I stood and listened for a long time. All was still.

"Thank Heaven!" I murmured, as I turned away. "The family have not been alarmed. She is safe."

I went home, but did not sleep that night. My brain was in a whirl from the excitement of this new adventure. In that adventure every circumstance was one of the most impressive character; and at the same time every thing was contradictory and bewildering to such an extent that I did not know whether to congratulate myself or not, whether to rejoice or lament. I might rejoice at finding the Lady of the Ice; but
my joy was modified by the thought that I found her meditating flight with another man. I had saved her; but then I was very well aware that, if I had not come, she might never have left her home, and might never have been in a position to need help. Jack had, no doubt, neglected to meet her. Over some things, however, I found myself exulting—first, that, after all, I had saved her, and, secondly, that she had found out Jack.

As for Jack, my feelings to him underwent a rapid and decisive change. My excitement and irritation died away. I saw that we had both been under a mistake, I might perhaps have blamed him for his treachery toward Marion in urging her to a rash and ruinous elopement; but any blame which I threw on him was largely modified by a certain satisfaction which I felt in knowing that his failure to meet her, fortunate as it was for her, and fortunate as it was also for himself, would change her former love for him into scorn and contempt. His influence over her was henceforth at an end, and the only obstacle that I saw in the way of my love was suddenly and effectually removed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PUZZLING QUESTIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ANSWERED AS YET.—A STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION.—REUNION OF A BROKEN FRIENDSHIP.—PIECES ALL COLLECTED AND JOINED,—JOY OF JACK.—SOLEMN DEBATES OVER THE GREAT PUZZLE OF THE PERIOD,—BRIEFLY CONFERENCES AND CONFIDENCES,—AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

The night passed, and the morning came, and the impression of these recent events grew more and more vivid. The very circumstances under which I found my Lady of the Ice were not such as are generally chosen by the novelist for an encounter between the hero and heroine of his novel. Of that I am well aware; but then I'm not a novelist, and I'm not a hero, and the Lady of the Ice isn't a heroine—so what have you got to say to that? The fact is, I'm talking about myself. I found Marion running away, or trying to run away, with my intimate friend. The elopement, however, did not come off. She was thrown into my way in an amazing manner, and I identified her with my Lady, after whom I longed and pined with a consuming passion. Did the discovery of the Lady of the Ice under such circumstances change my affections? Not at all. They only grew all the stronger. The Lady was the same as ever. I had not loved Nora, but the Lady of the Ice; and now that I found out who she was, I loved Marion. This happens to be the actual state of the case; and, whether it is artistic or not, does not enter into my mind for a single moment.

Having thus explained my feelings concerning Marion, it will easily be seen that any resentment which I might have felt against Jack for causing her grief, was more than counterbalanced by the prospect I now had that she would give him up forever. Besides, our quarrel was on the subject of Nora, and this had to be explained. Then, again, my duel was on the topic, and I wanted Jack for a second. I therefore determined to hunt him up as soon as possible.

But in the course of the various meditations which had filled the hours of the night, one thing puzzled me extremely, and that was the pretension of Nora to be my Lady of the Ice. Why had she done so? Why did Marion let her? Why did O'Halloran announce his own wife to me as the lady whom I had saved? No doubt Nora
and Marion had some reason. But what, and why? And what motive had O'Halloran for deceiving me? Clearly none. It was evident that he believed Nora to be the lady. It was also evident that on the first night of the reading of the advertisement, and my story, he did not know that the companion of that adventure of mine was a member of his family. The ladies knew it, but he didn't. It was, therefore, a secret of theirs, which they were keeping from him. But why? And what possible reason had Marion for denying it, and Nora for coming forward and owning up to a false character to O'Halloran?

All these were perplexing and utterly bewildering mysteries, of which I could make nothing.

At length I cut short the whole bother by going off to Jack's.

He was just finishing his breakfast.

The moment he saw me, he started to his feet, and gave a spring toward me. Then he grasped my hand in both of his, while his face grew radiant with delight.

"Macrorie! old boy!" he cried. "What a perfect trump! I'll be hanged if I wasn't going straight over to you! Couldn't stand this sort of thing any longer.—What's the use of all this beastly row? I haven't had a moment's peace since it began. Yes, Macrorie," he continued, wringing my hand hard, "I'll be hanged if I wouldn't give up every one of the women—I was just thinking that I'd give them all for a sight of your old face again—except, perhaps, poor little Louie—" he added. "But, come, sit down, load up, and fumigate."

And he brought out all his pipes, and drew up all his chairs, and showed such unfeigned delight at seeing me, that all my old feelings of friendship came back, and resumed their places.

"Well, old fellow," said I, "do you know in the first place—our row—you know—"

"Oh, bother the row!"
"Well, it was all a mistake."
"A mistake?"
"Yes. We mistook the women."
"How's that? I'm in the dark."
"Why, there are two ladies at O'Halloran's."
"Two?"
"Yes, and they weren't introduced, and, as they're both young, I thought they were both his daughters."
"Two women! and young? By Jove!"
cried Jack—"and who's the other?"
"His wife!"
"His wife? and young?" The idea seemed to overwhelm Jack.
"Yes," said I, "his wife, and young, and beautiful as an angel."
"Young, and beautiful as an angel!" repeated Jack. "Good Lord, Maenorie!"
"Well, you know, I thought his wife was Miss O'Halloran, and the other Miss Marion."
"What's that? his wife? You thought she was Miss O'Halloran?"
"Yes, and the one I saved on the ice, you know—"
"Well, all I can say is, old fellow, I'm confoundedly sorry for your sake that she's a married woman. That rather knocks your little game. At the same time it's a very queer thing that I didn't know any thing about it. Still, I wasn't at the house much, and Mrs. O'Halloran might have been out of town. I didn't know any thing about their family affairs, and never heard them mentioned. I thought there was only a daughter in the family. Never dreamed of there being a wife."
"Well, there is a wife—a Mrs. O'Halloran—so young and beautiful that I took her for the old man's daughter; and Jack, my boy, I'm in a scrape."
"A scrape?"

"Yes—a duel. Will you be my second?"

"A duel!" cried Jack, and gave a long whistle.

"Fact," said I, "and it all arose out of my mistaking a man's wife for his daughter."

"Mistaking her?" cried Jack, with a roar of laughter. "So you did. Oh, Macrorie! how awfully spooney you were about her, you know—ready to fight with your best friend about her, and all that, you know. And how did it go on? What happened? Come, now, don't do the reticent. Out with it, man. Every bit of it. A duel! And about a man's wife! Good Lord! Macrorie, you'll have to leave the regiment. An affair like this will rouse the whole town. These infernal newspapers will give exaggerated accounts of every thing, you know. And then you'll get it. By Jove, Macrorie, I begin to think your scrape is worse than mine."

"By-the-way, Jack, how are you doing?"

"Confound it man, what do you take me for? Do you think I'm a stalk or a stone. No, by Jove, I'm a man, and I'm crazy to hear about your affair. What happened? What did you do? What did you say? Something must have taken place, you know. You must have been awfully sweet on her. By Jove! And did the old fellow see you at it? Did he notice any thing? A duel! Something must have happened. Oh, by Jove! don't I know the old rascal! Not boisterous, not noisy, but keen, sir, as a razor, and every word a dagger. The most savage, cynical, cutting, insulting scoundrel of an Irishman that I ever met with. By Heaven, Macrorie, I'd like to be principal in the duel instead of second. By Jove, how that old villain did walk into me that last time I called there!"

"Well, you see," I began, "when I went to his house he introduced me, and didn't introduce her."

"Yes."

"Well, I talked with her several times, but for various reasons, unnecessary to state, I never mentioned her name. I just chatted with her, you know, the way a fellow generally does."

"Was the old fellow by?"

"Oh, yes, but you know yesterday I went there and found her alone."

"Well?"

"Well—you know—you were so determined at the time of our row, that I resolved to be beforehand, so I at once made a rush for the prize, and—and—"

"And, what?"

"Why—did the spooney—you know—told her my feelings—and all that sort of thing, you know."

I then went on and gave Jack a full account of that memorable scene, the embarrassment of Nora, and the arrival of O'Halloran, together with our evening afterward, and the challenge.

To all this Jack listened with intense eagerness, and occasional bursts of uncontrollable laughter.

I concluded my narrative with my departure from the house. Of my return, my wanderings with Marion, my sight of him at Berton's, and all those other circumstances, I did not say a word. Those things were not the sort that I chose to reveal to anybody, much less to Jack.

Suddenly, and in the midst of his laughter and nonsense, Jack's face changed. He grew serious. He thrust his hand into his pocket with something like consternation, and then drew forth—
CHAPTER XXX.

A LETTER!—STRAIGHT HESITATION.—GLOOMY FOREBODINGS.—JACK DOWN DEEP IN THE DUMPS.—FRESH CONFESSIONS.—WHY HE MISSED THE TRYST.—REMORSE AND REVENGE.

—JACK'S VOWS OF VENGEANCE.—A VERY SINGULAR AND UNACCOUNTABLE CHARACTER.—JACK'S GLOOMY MENACES.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I'll be hanged if I haven't forgot all about it. It's been in my pocket ever since yesterday morning."

Saying this, he held up the letter, and looked at it for some time without opening it, and with a strange mixture of embarrassment and ruefulness in his expression.

"What's that?" said I, carelessly. "A letter? Who's it from, Jack?"

Jack did not give any immediate answer. He turned the letter over and over, looking at it on the front and on the back.

"You seem hit hard, old man," said I, "about something. Is it a secret?"

"Oh, no," said Jack, with a sigh.

"Well, what's the matter?"

"Oh, only this," said he, with another sigh.

"What, that letter?"

"Yes."

"It don't look like a dun, old chap—so, why fret?"

"Oh, no," said Jack, with a groan.

"What's the reason you don't open it?"

Jack shook his head.

"I've a pretty good idea of what's in it," said he. "There are some letters you can read without opening them, old boy, and this is one of them. You know the general nature of the contents, and you don't feel altogether inclined to go over all the small details."

"You don't mean to say that you're not going to open it?"

"Oh, I'll open it," said Jack, more dolefully than ever.

"Then, why don't you open it now?"

"Oh, there's no hurry—there's plenty of time."

"It must be something very unimportant. You say you've had it lying in your pocket ever since the day before yesterday. So, what's the use of getting so tragic all of a sudden?"

"Macrorie, old chap," said Jack, in a tone of hollow despair.

"Well?"

"Do you see that letter?" and he held it up in his hand.

"Yes."

"Well, in that I am to read a convincing proof that I am a scoundrel!"


Jack laid the unopened letter on the table, filled his pipe, lighted it, and then, throwing himself back in his chair, sat staring at the ceiling, and sending forth great clouds of smoke that gathered in dense folds and soon hung overhead in a dark canopy.

I watched him in silence for some time. I suspected what that letter might be, but did not in any way let my suspicion appear.

"Jack," said I, at last, "I've seen you several times in trouble during the last few days, but it is now my solemn conviction, made up from a long observation of your character, your manner, your general style, and your facial expression, that on this present occasion you are hit harder than ever you've been since I had the pleasure of your acquaintance."
"That's a fact," said Jack, earnestly and solemnly.
"It isn't a secret, you said?"
"No, not from you. I'll tell you presently. I need one pipe, at least, to soothe my nerves."

He relapsed into silence, and, as I saw that he intended to tell me of his own accord, I questioned him no further, but sat waiting patiently till he found strength to begin the confession of his woes.

At length he reached forward, and once more raised the letter from the table.
"Macrorie, my boy."
"Well?"
"Do you see this letter?"
"Yes."
"Whom do you think it's from?"
"How do I know?"
"Well," said Jack, "this letter is the sequel to that conversation you and I had, which ended in our row."
"The sequel?"
"Yes. You remember that I left threatening that Number Three should be mine."
"Oh, yes; but don't bother about that now," said I.

"Bother about it? Man alive, that's the very thing that I have to do! The bother, as you call it, has just begun. This letter is from Number Three."
"Number Three? Marion!"
"Yes, Marion, Miss O'Halloran, the one I swore should be mine. Ha, ha!" laughed Jack, wildly; "a precious mess I've made of it! Mine? By Jove! What's the end of it? To her a broken heart—to me dishonor and infamy!"

"My dear boy," said I, "doesn't it strike you that your language partakes, to a slight extent, of the melodramatic? Don't get stagy, dear boy."
"Stagy? Good Lord, Macrorie! Wait till you see that letter."

"That letter! Why, confound it, you haven't seen it yourself yet."
"Oh, I know, I know. No need for me to open it. Look here, Macrorie, will you promise not to throw me over after I tell you about this?"
"Throw you over?"
"Yes. You'll stick by a fellow still—"
"Stick by you? Of course, through thick and thin, my boy."

Jack gave a sigh of relief.
"Well, old chap," said he, "you see, after I left you, I was bent on nothing but Marion. The idea of her slipping out of my hands altogether was intolerable. I was as jealous of you as fury, and all that sort of thing. The widow and Miss Phillips were forgotten. Even little Louie was given up. So I wrote a long letter to Marion."

Jack paused, and looked hard at me.
"Well," said I.
"Well," said he, "you know her last letter to me was full of reproaches about the widow and Miss Phillips. She even alluded to Louie, though how under heaven she had heard about her is more than I can imagine. Well, you know, I determined to write her a letter that would settle all these difficulties, and at the same time gain her for myself, for good and all. You see I had sworn to get her from you, and I could think of nothing but that oath. So I wrote—but, oh, Macrorie, Macrorie, why, in Heaven's name, did you make that mistake about Mrs. O'Halloran, and force that infernal oath out of me? Why did that confounded old blockhead forget to introduce her to you? That's the cause of all my woes. But I won't bore you, old fellow; I'll go on. So, you see, in my determination to get her, I stuck at nothing. First of all, instead of attempting to explain away her reproaches, I turned them all
back upon her. I was an infatuated fool, Macrorie, when I wrote that letter, but I
was not a villain. I wrote it with an earnest desire that it should be effective.
Well, I told her that she should not blame me for my gallantries, but herself for forcing
me to them. I reproached her for refusing to elope with me when I offered, and told
her she cared far more for her father's ease and comfort than she did for my happiness.
I swore that I loved her better than any of them, or all of them put together, and
I'll be hanged if I didn't, Macrorie, when I wrote it. Finally, I told her there was yet
time to save me, and, if she had a particle of that love which she professed, I implored
her now to fly with me. I besought her to name some time convenient to her, and
suggested—oh, Macrorie, I suggested—swear at me—curse me—do something or other—Macrorie, I suggested last night—
midnight—I did, by Heaven!"

And, saying this, Jack looked at me for some minutes in silence, with a wild ex-
pression that I had never before seen on his face.

"Last night, Macrorie!" he repeated—"midnight! Think of that. Why don't
you say something?"

"Say?" said I. "Why, hang it, man, what can I say? It's a case beyond words.
If you've made such an appointment, and broken it, you've—well, there's nothing to
say."

"That's true," said Jack, in a sepulchral tone. "That's true. I made the appoint-
ment, and, Macrorie—I was not there."

"Well, of course, I gathered as much
from the way you go on about it—but
that's what I should like to understand,
if it isn't a secret."

"Oh, no. I'll make no secret about any
ing thing connected with this business. Well,
then, I put the letter in the post-office, and
strolled off to call on Miss Phillips. Will
you believe it, she was 'not at home'! At
that, I swear I felt so savage that I forgot
all about Marion and my proposal. It was
a desperate cut. I don't know any thing
that has ever made me feel so savage. And
I feel savage yet. If she had any thing
against me, why couldn't she have seen me,
and had it out with me, fair and square?
It cut deep. By Jove! Well, then, I could
think of nothing else but paying her off.
So I organized a sleighing-party, and took
out the Bertons and some other girls. I
had Louie, you know, and we drove to
Montmorency. Fun, no end. Great spir-
ts. Louie teasing all the way. We got
back so late that I couldn't call on the wid-
ow. That evening I was at Chelmsford's
—a ball, you know—I was the only one
of ours that went. Yesterday, didn't call
on Miss Phillips, but took out Louie. On
my way I got this letter from the office, and
carelessly stuffed it into my pocket. It's
been there ever since. I forgot all about
it. Last evening there were a few of us at
Berton's, and the time passed like light-
ingen. My head was whirling with a cram
of all sorts of things. There was my anger
at Miss Phillips, there was a long story
Louie had to tell about the widow, and
then there was Louie herself, who drove
every other thought away. And so, Macro-
rie, Marion and my letter to her, and the
letter in my pocket, and the proposed elope-
ment, never once entered into my head. I
swear they had all passed out of my mind
as completely as though it had all been
some confounded dream."

Jack stopped, and again relapsed into
moody silence.

"I'll tell you what it is, old fellow," said
he, after a pause. "It's devilish hard to
put up with."

"What is?" I asked.
"This 'not-at-home' style of thing. But never mind—I'll pay her up!"

Now here was a specimen of rattle-brainishment—of levity—and of childishness; so desperate, that I began to doubt whether this absurd Jack ought to be regarded as a responsible being. It seemed simply impossible for him to concentrate his impulsive mind on any thing. He flings himself one day furiously into an elopement scheme—the next day, at a slight, he forgets all about the elopement, and, in a towering rage against Miss Phillips, devotes himself desperately to Louie. And now when the elopement scheme has been brought before him, even in the midst of his remorse—remorse, too, which will not allow him to open her letter—the thought of Miss Phillips once more drives away all recollection of Marion, even while he has before him the unopened letter of that wronged and injured girl. Jack's brain was certainly of a harum-scarum order, such as is not often found—he was a creature of whim and impulse—he was a rattle-brain, a scatter-brain—formed to win the love of all—both men and women—formed, too, to fall into endless difficulties—formed also with a native buoyancy of spirit which enabled him to float where others would sink. By those who knew him, he would always be judged lightly—by those who knew him not, he would not fail to be judged harshly. Louie knew him, and laughed at him—Marion knew him not, and so she had received a stroke of anguish. Jack was a boy—no, a child—or, better yet, a great big baby. What in the world could I say to him or do with him? I alone knew the fulness of the agony which he had inflicted, and yet I could not judge him as I would judge another man.

"I'll pay her up!" reiterated Jack, shaking his head fiercely.

"But before paying her up, Jack," said I, "wouldn't it be well to read that letter?"

Jack gave a sigh.

"You read it, Macrorie," said he; "I know all about it."

"Well," said I, "that is the most astonishing proposal that I ever heard even from you. To read a letter like that!—Why, such a letter should be sacred."

Jack's face flushed. He seized the letter, tore it open, and read. The flush on his face deepened. As he finished, he crushed it in his hand, and then relapsed into his sombre fit.

"It's just as I said, Macrorie," said he. "She promised to meet me at the time I mentioned. And she was there. And I was not. And now she'll consider me a scoundrel."

In a few moments Jack opened out the crushed note, and read it again.

"After all," said he, "she isn't so awfully affectionate."

"Affectionate!"

"No—she seems afraid, and talks a great deal too much of her father, and of her anguish of soul—yes, that's her expression—her anguish of soul in sacrificing him to me. By Jove!—sacrifice! Think of that! And she says she only comes because I reproach her with being the cause of grief—heavens and earth! and she says that she doesn't expect any happiness, but only remorse. By Jove! See here, Macrorie—did you ever in your life imagine that a woman, who loved a fellow well enough to make a runaway match with him, could write him in such a way? Why, hang it! she might have known that, before our honeymoon was over, that confounded old Irish scoundrel of a father of hers would have been after us, insisting on doing the heavy father of the comedy, and giving us his blessing in the strongest of brogues.
And, what's more, he'd have been borrowing money of me, the beggar! Borrowing money! of me—me—without a penny myself and head over heels in debt. Confound his impudence!

And Jack, who had begun this with remorse about Marion, ended with this burst of indignation at Marion's father, consequent upon a purely imaginary but very vivid scene, in which the latter was supposed to be extorting money from him. And he looked at me with a face that craved sympathy for such unmerited wrongs, and showed still more plainly the baby that was in him.

I made no answer. His quotations from Marion's letter showed me plainly how she had been moved, and what a struggle of soul this resolve had cost her. Now I could understand the full meaning of that sombre face which I had seen in O'Halloran's parlor, and also could see why it was that she had absented herself on that last evening. Did this letter change my sentiments about her? How could it, after what I already knew? It only elevated her, for it showed that at such a time her soul was racked and torn by the claims of filial duty. Under her hallucination, and under the glamour which Jack had thrown over her, she had done a deep wrong—but I alone knew how fearful was her disenchantment, and how keen was the mental anguish that followed.

"She'll never forgive me," said Jack, after a long silence.

"Who?" said I, with some bitterness, which came forth in spite of my new-found conviction of Jack's utter babyhood.—

"Who, Miss Phillips?"

"Oh, no," said Jack—"Marion."

"Forgive you!" I ejaculated.

"Of course not. It's bosh to use the word in such a connection. She'll hate and scorn me till her dying day."

"No, Jack," said I, somewhat solemnly,

"I think from what little I know of her, that if she gets over this, she'll feel neither hate nor scorn."

"Yes, she will," said Jack, pettishly.

"No," said I.

"You don't know her, my boy. She's not the one to forget this."

"No, she'll never forget it—but her feelings about you will be different from hate and scorn. She will simply find that she has been under a glamour about you, and will think of you with nothing but perfect indifference—and a feeling of wonder at her own infatuation."

Jack looked vexed.

"To a woman who don't know you, Jack, my boy—you become idealized, and heroic; but to one who does, you are nothing of the kind. So very impréciable a fellow as you are, cannot inspire a very deep passion. When a woman finds the fellow she admires falling in love right and left, she soon gets over her fancy. If it were some one other woman that had robbed her of your affection, she would be jealous; but when she knows that all others are equally charming, she will become utterly indifferent."

"See here, old boy, don't get to be so infernally oracular. What the mischief does a fellow like you know about that sort of thing? I consider your remarks as a personal insult, and, if I didn't feel so confoundedly cut up, I'd resent it. But as it is, I only feel bored, and, on the whole, I should wish it to be with Marion as you say it's going to be. If I could think it would be so, I'd be a deuced sight easier in my mind about her. If it weren't for my own abominable conduct, I'd feel glad that this sort of thing had been stopped—only I don't like to think of Marion being disappointed, you know—or hurt—and that sort of thing, you know. The fact is, I have no
business to get married just now—no—not even to the angel Gabriel—and this would have been so precious hard on poor little Louie."

"Louie—why," said I, "you speak confidently about her."

"Oh, never fear about her," said Jack. "She's able to take care of herself. She does nothing but laugh at me—no end."

"Nothing new, then, in that quarter?" I asked, feeling desirous now of turning away from the subject of Marion, which was undergoing the same treatment from Jack which a fine and delicate watch would receive at the hands of a big baby. "No fresh proposals?"

"No," said Jack, dolefully, "nothing but chaff."

"And Miss Phillips?"

"Affairs in that quarter are in status quo," said Jack. "She's chosen to not-at-home me, and how it's going to turn out is more than I can tell. But I'll be even with her yet. I'll pay her off!"

"Perhaps you won't find it so easy as you imagine."

"Won't I?" said Jack, mysteriously; "you'll see."

"Perhaps she's organizing a plan to pay you off."

"That's more than she can do."

"By-the-way—what about the widow?"

"Well," said Jack, seriously, "whatever danger is impending over me, may be looked for chiefly in that quarter."

"Have you seen her lately?"

"No—not since the evening I took the chaplain there."

"You must have heard something."

"Yes," said Jack, moodily. "What?"

"Well, I heard from Louie, who keeps well up in my affairs, you know. She had gathered something about the widow."

"Such as what?"

"Well, you know—she wouldn't tell."

"Wouldn't tell?"

"No—wouldn't tell—chaffed me—no end, but wouldn't go into particulars."

"But could you find out whether it affected you or not?"

"Oh, of course, I took that for granted. That was the point of the whole joke, you know. Louie's chaff consisted altogether of allusions to some mysterious plan of the widow's, by which she would have full, ample, perfect, complete, and entire vengeance on me."

"That's bad."

"It is."

"A widow's a dangerous thing."

"Too true, my boy," said Jack, with a sigh; "nobody knows that better than I do."

"I wonder you don't try to disarm her."

"Disarm her?"

"Yes—why don't you call on her?"

"Well, confound it, I did call only a day or two ago, you know. The last two or three days I've been engaged."

"Yes, but such an engagement will only make the widow more furious."

"But, confound it, man, it's been simply impossible to do anything else than what I have been doing."

"I'll tell you what it is, Jack," said I, solemnly, "the widow's your chief danger. She'll ruin you. There's only one thing for you to do, and that is what I've already advised you to do, and Louie, too, for that matter. You must fly."

"Oh, bosh!—how can I?"

"Leave of absence—sell out—any thing."

Jack shook his head, and gave a heavy sigh.
CHAPTER XXXI.

A FRIENDLY CALL.—PRELIMINARIES OF THE DUEL NEATLY ARRANGED.—A DAMP JOURNEY, AND DEPRESSED SPIRITS.—A SECLUDED SPOT.—DIFFICULTIES WHICH ATTEND A DUEL IN A CANADIAN SPRING.—A MASTERY DECISION.—WHO SHALL HAVE THE FIRST SHOT, STRUGGLE FOR PRECEDENCE,—A VERY SINGULAR AND VERY OBSTINATE DISPUTE.—I SAVE O'HALLORAN FROM DEATH BY RHEUMATISM.

Before the close of the day a gentleman called on me from O'Halloran, whom I referred to Jack, and these two made arrangements for the duel. It was to take place in a certain locality, which I do not intend to mention, and which was no matter how many miles out of town.

We left at an early hour, and the doctor accompanied us. Jack had sufficient foresight to fill the sleigh with all the refreshments that might be needed on such an occasion. We drove to O'Halloran's house, where we found his sleigh waiting, with himself and a friend all ready to start. They led the way, and we followed.

It was a nasty time, the roads were terrible. They were neither one thing nor the other. There was nothing but a general mixture of ice heaps, slush, thawing snowdrifts, bare ground, and soft mud. Over this our progress was extremely slow. Added to this, the weather was abominable. It was warm, soft, slumpy, and muggy. The atmosphere had changed into a universal drizzle, and was close and oppressive. At first O'Halloran's face was often turned back to hail us with some jovial remark, to which we responded in a similar manner; but after a time silence settled on the party, and the closeness, and the damp, and the slow progress, reduced us one and all to a general state of sulkiness.

At length we came to a little settlement consisting of a half-dozen houses, one of which bore a sign on which we read the words Hôtel de France. We kept on without stopping, and O'Halloran soon turned to the right, into a narrow track which went into the woods. In about half an hour we reached our destination. The sleighs drew up, and their occupants prepared for business.

It was a small cleared space in the middle of the woods. The forest-trees arose all around, dim, gloomy, and dripping. The ground was dotted with decayed stumps, and covered with snow in a state of semi-liquefaction. Beneath all was wet; around all was wet; and above all was wet. The place with its surroundings was certainly the most dismal that I had ever seen, and the dank, dark, and dripping trees threw an additional gloom about it.

We had left Quebec before seven. It was after twelve when we reached this place.

"Well, me boy," said O'Halloran to me, with a gentle smile, "it's an onseasonable time of year for a jool, but it can't be helped—an' it's a mighty uncomfortable pleece, so it is."

"We might have had it out in the road in a quiet way," said I, "without the trouble of coming here."

"The road!" exclaimed O'Halloran. "Be the powers, I'd have been delighted to have had it in me own parrulor. But what can we do? Sure it's the barbarous legisletion of this country, that throts to stoilfe and raypriss the sintimints of honor, and the code of chivalry. Sure it's a bad pleece intoirely. But you ought to see it in the summer. It's the most sayquisht shored localeetee that ye could wish to see."
Saying this, O'Halloran turned to his friend and then to us.

"Gentlemen," said he, "allow me to introduce to ye my very particular friend, Mr. Murtagh McGinty."

Mr. Murtagh McGinty rose and bowed, while we did the same, and disclosed the form of a tall, elderly, and rather dilapidated Irishman.

All this time we had remained in our sleighs. The surrounding scene had impressed us all very forcibly, and there was a general disinclination to get out. The expanse of snow, in its half-melted condition, was enough to deter any reasonable being. To get out was to plunge into an abyss of freezing slush.

A long discussion followed as to what ought to be done. Jack suggested trying the road; McGinty thought we might drive on farther. The doctor did not say any thing. At last O'Halloran solved the difficulty.

He proposed that we should all remain in the sleighs, and that we should make a circuit so as to bring the backs of the sleighs at the requisite distance from one another.

It was a brilliant suggestion; and no sooner was it made, than it was adopted by all. So the horses were started, and the sleighs were turned in the deep slush until their backs were presented to one another. To settle the exact distance was a matter of some difficulty, and it had to be decided by the seconds. Jack and McGinty soon got into an altercation, in which Jack appealed to the light of reason, and McGinty to a past that was full of experience. He overwhelmed Jack with so many precedents for his view of the case, that at last the latter was compelled to yield. Then we drove forward, and then backward; now we were too far away, again we were too near, and there didn't appear to be any prospect of a settlement.

At last O'Halloran suggested that we should back the sleighs toward one another till they touched, and then his sleigh would move forward twelve paces.

"But who's to pace them?" asked Jack.

"Why the horse, of course," said O'Halloran. "Sure it's a regular pacer he is, and bred up to it, so he is."

To this Jack had nothing to say.

So the horses backed and the sleighs touched one another.

"Wait a minute McGinty, me boy," said O'Halloran—putting his hand on his friend's arm—"let's all take somethin' warrum. Me system is slowly conjaylin', an' such a steeet of things is moighty wholesome."

This proposition was received with the same unanimity which had greeted O'Halloran's other propositions. Flasks were brought out; and some minutes were passed in a general, a convivial, and a very affectionate interchange of courtesies.

"Me boy," said O'Halloran to me, affectionately, "ye haven't had so much iXPXRIENCE AS I HAVE, SO I LEK THE LIBERTY TO GIVE YE A SMALL BIT OF INSTERRUATION. WHIN YE FOIRE, EEM LOW! MOIND THAT, NOW—YE'LL BE SURE TO HIT."

"Thank you," said I.

He wrung my hand heartily; and then motioning to McGinty, his sleigh started off, and advanced a few paces from ours, a little farther than the usual distance on such an occasion. With this he seemed to be satisfied, and, as nobody made any objection, we prepared for the business of the day.

O'Halloran and I stood up in the sleighs, while the seconds kept their seats. Jack and the doctor sat in the front seat of our sleigh. McGinty sat beside O'Halloran as
he stood up. I stood in the after-seat of our sleigh.

"Shall I give the word?" said Jack.

"No," said McGinty. "I've had more experience. I've been second at elvin joys—an' hope to assist at as minny more."

"Shure we won't trouble ayther of ye," said O'Halloran. "It's me that's fought more joys than you've been second at. Me friend Macrorie and I'll manage it to shoot ourselves—so we will."

"Ye can't give the wordyersilves," said McGinty.

"An' what do we want of a word, thin?" said O'Halloran.

"To foire by," said McGinty.

"There's a peculecareteet," said O'Halloran, loftily, "in the prisint occasion that obvceates the nicissitee of such prosaydings, and inables us to dispinse with any worrd of command. Macrorie, me boy—frind of me sowl—I addhriss you as the Orish addhrissed the English at Fontenoy: 'Fire first!'"

And saying this, O'Halloran bowed and then stood erect, facing me with a grave countenance.

"Fire first?" said I. "Indeed, Mr. O'Halloran, I'll do nothing of the kind."

"Indade and you shall," said he, with a laugh. "I insist upon it!"

"Well, if it comes to that," said I, "what's to prevent me from insisting that you shall fire the first shot?"

"Shure and ye wouldn't dayprove me of the plasure of giving you the prasaydince," said he.

"Then, really," said I, "you will force me to insist upon your having the precedence. You're an older man than I am, and ought to have the first place. So, Mr. O'Halloran—fire first!"

"Thank you," said he, with a bow, "but really, me boy, you must excuse me if I insist upon it."

"Oh, no," said I. "If it were any other occasion, I would cheerfully give you the precedence, and so I give it to you here."

"But, you see," said O'Halloran, "you must consider me in the light of an inter-tainer. Ye're my guest to a certain extent. I must give up all the honors to you. So foire awee, me boy, and cem low."

"No," said I, "I really couldn't think of it."

This friendly altercation went on for some time, while the others sat listening in amazement.

McGinty was the first to interrupt.

"It's in defoince of all the joolin' code," said he, starting up. "I must inter my protest."

"So say I," cried Jack. "I say let the usual word be given—or else if one must have the first shot, let them draw for it."

O'Halloran looked upon them both with a smile of benevolent pity.

"McGinty," said he.

"Well." "Ye know me?"

"Sure an' I do."

"And how many joys I've fought?"

"Meself does."

"Am I a choild at it? Will ye be koinde enough to mition any one that has any cleem to considhers himseff the shupayrior of Phaylim O'Halloran in the noiceties and the delicacies of the jooling code? Will ye be so good as to infarrum me what there is lift for me to lerrun?"

At this appeal Mr. Murtagh McGinty subsided into silence, and sat down again, shaking his head.

. Jack still insisted that the word of command should be given; but O'Halloran silenced him effectually by asking him if he had ever fought a duel.
"No," said Jack.
"Have ye ivir been second at one be-
fore?"
"No," said Jack, again.
"So this is your first time out?"
"Yes," said Jack, who looked deeply
humiliated.
"Will, thin," said O'Halloran, loftily,
"allow me to infarrum you, sir, that this
is the thirty-seventh tome that I've had
the plasure of taking part in a jool, ather
as principal or second."

Whereupon Jack was suppressed.
In all this the doctor took no part. He
looked cold, wet, uncomfortable, and un-
happy.
And now O'Halloran turned to me again.
"Me boy," said he, "if ye'll not grant
me this as a feevor, I'll cleem it as a
roight!"
"A right?" said I.
"Ya," said O'Halloran, solemnly, "a
roight!"
"I don't know what you mean," I said, in
some perplexity.
"I'll expleen. I'm undher a debt of
oblegeetion to you that ivir can repee.
Ye've seved the loife of me daughter, me
chold, me Marian—that's one debt—then
ye've seved my loife, me own. But for
you, I'd have been tarrun in payces by a
howling mob, so I would. Me oum loife is
yours. Jewty, and the cleems of grati-
chood, and the code of honor, all inspore
me with a desire to meek some rayturrun
for what ye've done for me.

"On the other hand," he continued,
"ye've made a misteeck of an onplisint
nature about Mrs. O'H. Ye didn't main
any harrum; but the dade's done, and
there it is. It necissitates a jool. We must
feec e one another to satisfy offlindid honor.
But at the seem tome, while this jool is
bus necissiteeted be the code of honor,
jewty and gratiohood must be considhred.
It's a moighty noise case," he continued,
meditatively, "and I don't think such a
case ivir came within my ixpayrience; but
that ixxtive ixpayrience which I've had
renders me the best judge of what may be
the most shootable course on the prisint
occasion. But the ulteeemete tindicney of
all me midcetctions on the subjekt is this
—that I must allow you to fire the first
shot."
"Well," said I, "if you insist on looking
at it in that light, and if you persist in
feeling obligation, that sense of obligation
ought to make you yield to my wishes,
and, if I don't want to fire first, you ought
not to insist upon it."

"No, me boy," said O'Halloran; "that's
all oldle casuisthree an' impty mitaphysics.
There's no process of ratiosheenction
that'll be ivere eeble to overturrun the sin-
timints of jewty and dilicacy that spring
spontaneous in the brist. So blaze away."

"Excuse me, but I insist on your firing
first."

"Be the powers, thin! and I insist on
your taking the lade."
"Pardon me, but you must."
"I'm inkeepble of such a lack of com-
mon cievilleetec," said he. "I must still
insist."

"And so must I."

This singular and very original altercata-
tion went on for some time. At last O'Hal-
loran took the cushions off the seat, and
deliberately sat down, facing me, with his
legs dangling over the back of the sleigh.
Seeing that our argument was to be con-
tinued for some time, and that he was thus
making himself comfortable, I did the
same. We thus sat facing one another.
The seconds here again interposed, but
were again baffled by O'Halloran, who ex-
plained the whole situation to them in so
A FRIENDLY CALL.

forcible a manner that they did not know how to answer him. For my part, I was firm in my resolve, and was not going to fire unless we both fired together. True, I might have fired in the air; but I knew O'Halloran so well by this time that I was convinced, if I did such a thing, he would reproach me for it, and insist on my firing again. And in that case it would all have to be commenced afresh.

So there we sat, with our legs dangling over the backs of our respective sleighs, facing one another, pistol in hand, and occasionally renewing the discussion. He was obstinate, I was equally so, and the time began to pass away, and the situation gradually grew more and more tedious to our companions. Still they could not say any thing. It was a punctilio of honor which they could not argue down, and behind all the argument which might be used there arose the very impressive accumulation of O'Halloran's past experience in the field of honor. So all that they could do was to make the best of the situation.

The situation! It was, at best, a dismal one. Overhead was a leaden sky; underneath, the thawing snow, which every hour assumed a more watery appearance; in the distance arose the dreary, gloomy, melancholy forest-trees; while all around was a thin, fine drizzle, which enveloped us, saturating and soaking us with watery vapor. We all became limp and bedraggled, in soul as well as body. The most determined buoyancy of spirit could not withstand the influence of that drizzle, and, one by one, we all sank beneath it.

But not without a struggle. For, at first, as O'Halloran and I thus sat facing one another, we did not forget the ordinary civilities of life, nor were we satisfied with sitting and staring at one another. On the contrary, we sought to beguile the time with an interchange of courtesy on both sides. I took my flask and drank to the health of O'Halloran. O'Halloran responded. Then the seconds followed. Then O'Halloran drank to the health of Jack and the doctor. Then I drank to the health of McGinty. Then Jack and the doctor drank to the health of O'Halloran, and McGinty pledged me.

Two hours passed, and found each of us sitting there in the same position. Jack and the doctor made a doleful attempt at a game of euchre, but soon gave it up. McGinty sat refreshing himself with his flask, defying the weather, laughing, joking, and singing. Then we all smoked. From time to time the seconds would make fresh efforts to shake our resolve. They proposed once more that we should toss up for it, or drive home now, and come out again—in fact, any thing rather than sit here amid this cold, and drizzle, and wet, and dismal gloom, and miserable, rheumatic atmosphere. But all these proposals were declined, and O'Halloran was immovable in his purpose; while I, on the other hand, was equally resolved that I would not fire first.

Thus time passed, and neither of us would yield. At length, the doctor settled himself down into the bottom of the sleigh, and drew the buffalo-robés over him. After a final expostulation, accompanied with a threat to drive off, Jack imitated his example. McGinty, seeing this, proceeded to make himself comfortable in the same way.

The poor horses had the worst time of it. The cold snow was up to their knees; and, as they stood there, they moved uneasily, trampling it down, till a pool of icy water lay beneath, in which they had to stand. I mentioned this to O'Halloran; but he only turned it against me, and made use
of it as a fresh argument to shake my decision.

At last I saw that O'Halloran's face and attitude had undergone a change. For my part, I was wet to the skin, and chilled to my very bones; but I was young and strong, and could stand even that. With O'Halloran, however, it was different. A man of sixty cannot sit with impunity, inactive, and exposed to a cold, slimy drizzle, such as this was, without feeling very serious effects, and anticipating worse. This he soon experienced. I saw his figure crouching down, and an expression of pain coming over his face. In the midst of his pain he still maintained his punctilious resolution; but how much did that cost him! It was his own fault, of course. It was all brought on by his impracticability, his whimsicality, his eccentricity, and his punctiliousness. Nevertheless, there was in him that which excited my deepest commiseration. The wretchedness and the pain of his face, and the suffering which was visible in his attitude, all touched me. He sat crouched down, shivering, shuddering, his teeth chattering, and presented a deplorable picture of one who struggled vainly against an overmastering pain.

My resolution was shaken by this. I rose to my feet.

“Mr. O'Halloran,” said I, “pardon me. I see that I am subjecting you to very great suffering. If you sit there any longer, exposed to this damp, you'll never get over it. It would be but poor courtesy to subject you to that any longer. And so I don't see what better I can do than allow you to have your own way. I'll have to give up my scruples, I suppose. I can't sit here any longer, and see you suffer. And so—here goes!—I'm willing to fire as you wish.”

At this O'Halloran rose to his feet with a cry of joy.

“The first shot!” he exclaimed.

“Yes,” said I, “the first. I'll fire, if you insist on it.”

“And that's just what I do,” said he, shivering.

At this I took aim.

Bang! went the shot. I afterward found that it passed through his hat.

O'Halloran now raised his pistol, and leveled it at me. But the pleasure of his triumph had excited him; and, besides, he was shivering from head to foot, and his teeth were chattering. An accurate aim was impossible. His hand could scarcely hold the pistol, and his benumbed finger could scarcely pull the trigger. He fired, and the bullet passed through the sleeve of my coat, and close to the doctor's head.

“Me boy,” he cried, flinging down the pistol, “there's no ind to the obleegcctions you put me under! I owe ye me loife a second tome. Ye've seveed me from death by fraizing.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOME AGAIN.—THE GROWLS OF A CONFIRMED GROWLER.—HOSPITALITY.—THE WELL-KNOWN ROOM.—VISION OF A LADY.—ALONE WITH MARION.—INTERCHANGE OF THOUGHT AND SENTIMENT.—TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.—AN EVENING TO BE REMEMBERED.—THE CONVIVIALITY OF O'HALLORAN.—THE HUMORS OF O'HALLORAN, AND HIS BACCHIC JOY.

We all hurried away from the ground as rapidly as possible, and soon reached the Hôtel de France. It was small, stuffy, and rather close, but, to people in our half-frozen condition, the big Canadian stove was a blessing beyond words. O'Halloran seemed like an habitué of the place, judging by the way he button-holed the landlord,
"At this I took aim. Bang! went the shot. I afterward found that it passed through his hat."—page 119.
and by the success with which he obtained "somethin' warrum" for the company. But the Hôtel de France was not a place where one might linger; and so, after waiting long enough to allow the heat of the Canadian stove to penetrate us, aided by the blended power of "somethin' warrum"—and long enough also to give oats to the horses, which, after all, must have had the worst of it—poor devils!—we started and dragged on to the town.

All this time O'Halloran did not appear to have recognized Jack at all. On the drive out this might have been accounted for, but, in the Hôtel de France, O'Halloran had a full and perfect inspection of him. If he did recognize him, it certainly did not appear in his manner. He exchanged words with Jack in a tone of hilarious cordiality, which did not seem as though he considered Jack an enemy; and Jack, who never failed to respond when greeted in such a way, met him more than halfway. It was evident that O'Halloran had not the smallest idea that Jack was that identical British officer whom he had expelled from his house.

Of all the party the doctor seemed to have suffered most; and, on the journey back, he kept up one prolonged growl at me. I was fated, he said, to bring him bad luck, and I would be the death of him. Once before he had ridden all night in the storm for me; and now here was another fool's errand. He seemed inclined to consider it as a personal insult, and actually felt aggrieved because O'Halloran's bullet had not shattered my arm, or penetrated my brain. Thus he alternated between shivering and swearing all the way back.

"I tell you what it is, Macrorie," he growled, "if you ever come to ask my help again on any occasion whatever, I'll take it as a personal insult. I wouldn't have come this time, but I thought it was to be an affair of honor. An affair of honor! Rot and nonsense! Dragging a fellow over the country all day to see a couple of pistols fired in the air! What sort of a thing do you call that? And here am I—in for it—yes—damn it, man!—I say again—in for it—to any extent—rheumatism, neuralgia, gout, inflammation, and fifty other things! If I thought you'd have any of them, I'd feel satisfied. But no—you're all right, and can afford to sit there grinning at the sufferings of a better man than yourself."

From which it will appear that the doctor was savage, and I was not.

On reaching Quebec, O'Halloran gave us all a comprehensive invitation to dinner.

But the doctor could not accept it. He had taken cold, and would have to go home. Jack could not accept it. He had a very pressing engagement. Mr. McGinty could not accept it, for he had some important business. So O'Halloran pressed me. I alone was disengaged. I had no rheumatism, no pressing engagement, no important business. O'Halloran was urgent in his invitation. Our duel seemed only to have heightened and broadened his cordiality. I was dying to see Marion—or to find out how she was—so what did I do? Why, I leaped at the invitation, as a matter of course.

So once more I was ushered into that comfortable and hospitable back-parlor. Since I had been there last, what events had occurred! O'Halloran left me for a time, and I was alone. I sat down, and thought of that night when I had wondered forth. I thought of all the wild fancies that had filled my brain, as I wondered about amid the storm, listening to the howl of the wind, and the deep, sullen moan...
of the river. I recalled that strange, weird superstition, which had drawn me back once more to the house—and the deep longing and craving which had filled my heart for one glimpse, however faint, of my Lady of the Ice. I thought of my return—of my earnest gaze around, of the deep toll of the midnight bell, and of the sudden revelation of that dim, shadowy figure of a veiled lady, that stood in faint outline by the house, which advanced to meet me as I hurried over to her.

It was quite dark. There were no lamps lighted, but the coal-fire flickered and threw a ruddy glow about the apartment; at times leaping up into brightness, and again dying down into dimness and obscurity. O'Halloran had gone up-stairs, leaving me thus alone, and I sat in the deep arm-chair with my mind full of these all-absorbing fancies; and, in the midst of these fancies, even while I was thinking of that veiled figure which I had seen under the shadow of the house—even thus—I became aware of a light footfall, and a rustling dress beside me.

I turned my head with a quick movement of surprise.

There was the figure of a lady—graceful, slender, formed in a mould of perfect elegance and loveliness, the dark drapery of her dress descending till it died away among the shadows on the floor. I stared for a moment in surprise. Then the light of the fire, which had subsided for a moment, leaped up, and flashed out upon the exquisite features, and the dark, lustrous, solemn eyes of Marion.

I sprang to my feet, with my heart beating so fast that it seemed impossible to breathe. The surprise was overwhelming. I had thought of her as raving in brain-fever, descending deep down into the abyss of delirium, and now—here she was—here—by my side!—my Lady of the Ice!—Marion!

"I heard that you were here," she said, in a low, tremulous voice, "and I could not help coming down to tell you how I—how I bless you for—for that night."

She stopped—and held out her hand in silence.

I seized it in both of mine. For a few moments I could not speak. At last I burst forth:

"Oh, my God! What bliss it is for me to see you!—I've been thinking about it ever since—I've been afraid that you were ill—that you would never get over it."

And still holding her hand in mine, I raised it with tremulous eagerness, and pressed it to my lips.

She gently withdrew it, but without any appearance of anger.

"No," said she, "I was not ill. A wakeful night, a very feverish excitement—that was all."

"I listened long after you left," said I, in a low voice; "and all was still."

"Yes," she said, in the same low voice.

"No one heard me. I reached my room without any one knowing it. But I had much to sustain me. For oh, sir, I felt deeply, deeply grateful to find myself back again, and to know that my folly had ended so. To be again in my dear home—with my dear papa—after the anguish that I had known!"

She stopped.—It was a subject that she could not speak on without an emotion that was visible in every tone. Her voice was sad, and low, and solemn, and all its intonations thrilled to the very core of my being. And for me—I had nothing to say—I thrilled, my heart bounded at the sight of her face, and at the tones of her voice; while within me there was a great and unspeakable joy. If I had dared to say to her
"And holding her hand in mine, I raised it with tremulous eagerness, and pressed it to my lips."
all that I felt at that moment! But how dare I? She had come in the fulness of her warm gratitude to thank me for what I had done. She did not seem to think that, but for me, she would not have left her home at all. She only remembered that I had brought her back. It was thus that her generous nature revealed itself.

Now, while she thus expressed such deep and fervent gratitude, and evinced such joy at being again in her home, and at finding such an ending to her folly, there came to me a great and unequalled exultation. For by this I understood that her folly was cured—that her infatuation was over—that the glamour had been dissipated—that her eyes had been opened—and the once-adored Jack was now an object of indifference.

"Have you told any one about it?" I asked.

"No," said she, "not a soul."

"He is my most intimate friend," said I, "but I have kept this secret from him. He knows nothing about it."

"Of course he does not," said she, "how was it possible for you to tell him? This is our secret."

I cannot tell the soft, sweet, and soothing consolation which penetrated my inmost soul at these words. Though few, they had a world of meaning. I noticed with delight the cool indifference with which she spoke of him. Had she expressed contempt, I should not have been so well pleased. Perfect indifference was what I wanted, and what I found. Then, again, she acknowledged me as the only partner in her secret, thus associating me with herself in one memorable and impressive way. Nor yet did she ask any questions as to whom I meant. Her indifference to him was so great that it did not even excite curiosity as to how I had found out who he was. She was content to take my own statement without any questions or observations.

And there, as the flickering light of the coal-fire sprang up and died out; as it threw from time to time the ruddy glow of its uprising flames upon her, she stood before me—a vision of perfect loveliness—like a goddess to the devotee, which appears for an instant amid the glow of some mysterious light, only to fade out of sight a moment after. The rare and perfect grace of her slender figure, with its dark drapery, fading into the gloom below—the fair outline of her face—her sad, earnest, and melancholy expression; the intense and solemn earnestness of her dark, lustrous eyes—all these conspired to form a vision such as impressed itself upon my memory forever. This was the full realization of my eager fancy—this was what I had so longed to see. I had formed my own ideal of my Lady of the Ice—in private life—in the parlor—meeting me in the world of society. And here before me that ideal stood.

Now, it gives a very singular sensation to a fellow to stand face to face with the woman whom he worships and adores, and to whom he dares not make known the feelings that swell within him; and still more singular is this sensation, when this woman, whom he adores, happens to be one whom he has carried in his arms for an indefinite time; and more singular yet is it, when she happens to be one whom he has saved once, and once again, from the most cruel fate; by whose side he has stood in what may have seemed the supreme moment of mortal life; whom he has sustained and cheered and strengthened in a dread conflict with Death himself; singular enough is the sensation that arises under such circumstances as these, my boy—singular, and overwhelming, and intolerable; a sensation
which paralyzes the tongue and makes one mute, yet still brings on a resistless and invincible desire to speak and make all known; and should such a scene be too long continued, the probability is that the desire and the longing thus to speak will eventually burst through all restraint, and pour forth in a volume of fierce, passionate eloquence, that will rush onward, careless of consequences. Now, such was my situation, and such was my sensation, and such, no doubt, would have been the end of it all, had not the scene been brought to an end by the arrival of O'Halloran and his wife, preceded by a servant with lights, who soon put the room in a state of illumination.

Nora, as I must still call her, was somewhat embarrassed at first meeting me—for she could not forget our last interview; but she gradually got over it, and, as the evening wore on, she became her old, lively, laughing, original self. O'Halloran, too, was in his best and most genial mood, and, as I caught at times the solemn glance of the dark eyes of Marion, I found not a cloud upon the sky that overhung our festivities. Marion, too, had more to say than usual. She was no longer so self-absorbed, and so abstracted, as she once was. She was not playful and lively like Nora; but she was, at least, not sad; she showed an interest in all that was going on, and no longer dwelt apart like a star.

It was evident that Nora knew nothing at all about the duel. That was a secret between O'Halloran and me. It was also evident that she knew nothing about Marion's adventure—that was a secret between Marion and me. There was another secret, also, which puzzled me, and of which O'Halloran must, of course, have known as little as I did, and this was that strange act of Nora's in pretending to be the Lady of the Ice. Why had she done it? For what possible reason? Why had Marion allowed her to do it? All this was a mystery. I also wondered much whether she thought that I still believed in that pretence of hers. I thought she did, and attributed to this that embarrassment which she showed when she first greeted me. On this, as on the former occasion, her embarrassment had, no doubt, arisen from the fact that she was playing a part, and the consciousness that such a part was altogether out of her power to maintain. Yet, why had she done it?

That evening I had a better opportunity to compare these two most beautiful women; for beautiful each most certainly was, though in a different way from the other. I had already felt on a former occasion the bewitching effect of Nora's manner, and I had also felt a peculiar and memorable extent that spell which had been cast upon me by Marion's glance. Now I could understand the difference between them and my own feelings. For in witchery, in liveliness, in musical laughter, in never-failing merriment, Nora far surpassed all with whom I had ever met; and for all these reasons she had in her a rare power of fascination. But Marion was solemn, earnest, intense; and there was that on her face which sent my blood surging back to my heart, as I caught her glance. Nora was a woman to laugh and chat with; Nora was kind and gracious, and gentle too; Nora was amiable as well as witty; charming in manner, piquant in expression, inimitable at an anecdote, with never-failing resources, a first-rate lady-conversationist, if I may use so formidable a word—in fact, a thoroughly fascinating woman; but Marion!—Marion was one, not to laugh with, but to die for; Marion had a face that haunted you; a glance that made your heart leap, and your
nerves tingle; a voice whose deep intona-
tions vibrated through all your being with a certain mystic meaning, to follow you after you had left her, and come up again in your thoughts by day, and your dreams by night—Marion! why Nora could be sur-
eyed calmly, and all her fascinating power analyzed; but Marion was a power in her-
self, who bewildered you and defied anal-
ysis.

During that time when Nora had been confounded in my mind with the Lady of the Ice, she had indeed risen to the chief place in my thoughts, though my mind still failed to identify her thoroughly. I had thought that I loved her, but I had not. It was the Lady of the Ice whom I loved; and, when Marion had revealed herself, then all was plain. After that revelation Nora sank into nothingness, and Marion was all in all.

Oh, that evening, in that pleasant parlor! Shall I ever forget it?

Our talk was on all things. Of course, I made no allusion to my journey over the ice, and Nora soon saw that she was free from any such unpleasant and embarrass-
ning remarks. Freed from this fear, she became herself again. Never was she more vivacious, more sparkling, or more charm-
ing. O'Halloran joined the conversation in a manner that showed the rarest resources of wit, of fun, and of genial humor. Marion, as I said before, did not hold aloof, but took a part which was subordinate, it is true, yet, to me, far more effective; indeed, incomparably more so than that of the others. Indeed, I remember now nothing else but Marion.

So the evening passed, and at length the ladies retired. Nora bade me adieu with her usual cordiality, and her kindly and newwitching glance; while Marion's eyes threw upon me their lustrous glow, in which there was revealed a certain deep and solemn earnestness, that only intensi-
ified, if such a thing were possible, the spell which she had thrown over my soul.

And then it was "something' warrum." Under the effects of this, my host passed through several distinct and well-defined moods or phases.

First of all, he was excessively friendly and affectionate. He alluded to our late adventure, and expressed himself delighted with the result.

Then he became confidential, and ex-
plained how it was that he, an old man, happened to have a young wife.

Fifteen years ago, he said, Nora had been left under his care by her father. She had lived in England all her life, where she had been educated. Shortly after he had become her guardian he had been comp-
pelled to fly to America, on account of his connection with the Young-Ireland party, of which he was a prominent member. He had been one of the most vigorous writers in one of the Dublin papers, which was most hostile to British rule, and was therefore a marked man. As he did not care about imprisonment or a voyage to Botany Bay, he had come to America, bringing with him his ward Nora, and his little daughter Marion, then a child of not more than three or four. By this act he had saved himself and his property, which was amply suf-
cient for his support. A few years passed away, and he found his feelings toward Nora somewhat different from those of a parent—and he also observed that Nora looked upon him with tenderer feelings than those of gratitude.

"There's a great difference intoirely," said he, "between us now. I've lost my youth, but she's kept hers. But thin, at that toime, me boy, Phaylim O'Halloran was a moightly different man from the one
you see before you. I was not much over forty—in me prime—feeling as young as any of thim, an' it wasn't an unnatural thing that I should win the love of ayven a young gyrral; so it wasn't. An' so she became me woife—my Nora—me darlin'—the loight of me loife. And she's accom-
panied me iver since on all my wandher-
in's and phelandherin's, and has made the
home of the poor ixole a paradise, so she
has."

All this was very confidential, and such
a confidence would probably never have
been given, had it not been for the effects
of "somethin' warrum;" but it showed me
several things in the plainest manner. The
first was, that Nora must be over thirty,
at any rate, and was therefore very much
older than I had taken her to be. Again,
her English accent and style could be ac-
counted for; and finally the equally English
accent and style of Marion could be under-
stood and accounted for on the grounds of
Nora's influence. For a child always catches
the accent of its mother rather than of its
father, and Nora must, for nearly fifteen
years, have been a sort of mother, more or
less, to Marion.

And now, why the mischief did Nora pre-
tend to be my Lady of the Ice, and in the
very presence of Marion try to maintain a
part which she could not carry out? And
why, if she were such a loving and faithful
wife, did she deliberately deceive the con-
fiding O'Halloran, and make him believe
that she was the one whom I had saved?
It was certainly not from any want of
love for him. It must have been some
scheme of hers which she had formed
in connection with Marion. But what
in the world could such a scheme have
been, and why in the world had she formed
it?

This was the puzzling question that arose
afresh, as O'Halloran detailed to me very
confidentially the history of this romantic
experience in his life.

But this was only one of his moods, and
this mood passed away. The romantic and
the confidential was succeeded by the liter-
ary and the scholastic, with a dash of the
humorous.

A trivial remark of mine, in the course
of some literary criticisms of his, turned his
to the subject of puns. He at
once plunged into the history of puns. He
quoted Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence,
Cicero. He brought forward illustrations
from Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton,
Puritan writers, Congreve, Cowper, and
others, until he concluded with Hood,
who he declared had first unfolded to
the human mind the possibility of the
pun.

From this he passed off lightly and eas-
ily into other things, and finally glided into
the subject of medieval Latin. This, he
asserted, was born and nourished under
peculiar circumstances, so different from
classical Latin as to be almost a new lan-
guage, yet fully equal to it in all the best
characteristics of a language. He defied
me to find any thing in classical poetry that
would compare with the "Dies Irae," the
"Stabat Mater," or the "Rhythm of Ber-
nard de Morlaix." As I was and am rather
rusty in Latin, I did not accept the chal-
lenge. Then he asserted that mediaval
Latin was so comprehensive in its scope
that it was equally good for the convivial
and for the solemn, and could speak equally
well the sentiments of fun, love, and reli-
gion. He proved this by quotations from
the immortal Walter Mapes. He over-
whelmed me, in fact, with quotations. I
caved in. I was suppressed. I became
extinct. Finally he offered to show me an
original song of his own, which he asserted
was "imminently shoted to the prissint occasion."

As I had no other way of showing my opinion of it, I begged the paper from him, and gave here a true copy of it, verbatim et literatim, notes and all:

PHELIMII HALLO RANII CARMEN.

Omnibus Hiberniciis
Semper est ex more
Vino curas pollere
Ant montano rore; *
Is quia nescit bibere,
Ant est cito satur,
Ille, Pol! me judice
Parvus est potator.†

Omnibus America
Semper est in ore
Tuba, frondes habens ex
Nicotino flore;
Denais fumi nubibus
Et vivunt et moveant,
Hoc est summum gaudium
Sic Te Bacche! sovent.‡

Omnis tunc Hibernicus
Migret sine mora,
Veniat Americanam
Vivat hac in ora,
Nostrim Baccam capiat, §
Et montanum rorem,
Erlit, Pol! Americanum
In saecula seculorum.

Amen.

* Montano rore—cf., id. IIlb., mountain-dew; item, id. Scot., IIlb., et Amer., whiskey.
† Parvus potator—cf., id. Amer., small potator.
‡ Te Bacche—cf., id. Amer., Tobacco, 1. e., tobacco.
§ Baccam—in America vulgo dicet solot, Backy.
\ Americus—cf., id. Amer., a merry cuss.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM APRIL TO JUNE.—TEMPORA MUTANTUR,
ET NOS MUTAMUR IN ILLIS.—STARTLING
CHANGE IN MARION!—AND WHY?—JACK
AND HIS WOES.—THE VENGEANCE OF MISS
PHILLIPS.—LADIES WHO REFUSE TO ALLOW
THEIR HEARTS TO BE BROKEN.—Noble At-
TITUDE OF THE WIDOW.—CONSO LATIONS OF
LOUIE.

Time passed on, and week succeeded to
week, without any occurrence of a decisive
nature. April died out, May passed, and
June came. Then all the trees burst into
leaf, and the fields arrayed themselves in
green, and all Nature gave one grand leap
from winter into summer.

During all this time I was a constant and
a favored guest at O'Halloran's. I really
don't think I ever went anywhere else. I
cut off all visits to others—that is, in the
evening—and went there only. O'Halloran
always received me with the same cordiality, and the ladies always met me with
the same smile.

So many evenings in that comfortable
parlor, so many chats with the ladies, so
many interviews with my host, could not fail to bring us nearer together. Such
was, indeed, the case with O'Halloran and
Nora; but with Marion it was different.
There was, indeed, between us the con-
sciousness of a common secret, and she
could not fail to see in my manner some-
thing warmer than common—something
more tender than friendship, for instance
—something, in fact, which, without being
at all spooney, was still expressive of very
delicate regard. Yet there came over her
something which excited my fears, and
filled me with gloomy forebodings. She
seemed to lose that cordiality which she
evinced on that first evening when I talked with her alone. She never threw at me those deep glances which then had made my nerves tingle. She seemed constrained and reserved. Only in speaking to me, there was always in her voice an indefinable sweetness and gentleness, which made her tones ring in my memory afterward like soft music. That showed me that there was no coldness on her part; and so, too, when I did catch at times the glance of her dark eyes, there was something in them so timid, so soft, and so shy, that I could not think of her as wearying of me. Yet this Marion, timid, tender, and shy; this Marion, holding aloof under evident constraint, keeping apart, giving me no opportunity; this Marion, who had now exchanged the intensity and the solemnity of former days for something so very different—became a puzzle to me.

Why had she changed? Was it her returning regard for Jack? Impossible. His name had several times been mentioned without causing any emotion in her. His approaching marriage with Mrs. Finnimore had once been mentioned by Nora, who spoke of it as an interesting item of news. Marion heard it with indifference. Or was she trying to withdraw from any further intimacy with me? Was she suspicious of my intentions, and desirous of giving me no hope? Was she trying to repel me at the outset? It seemed so. And so a great fear gradually arose in my heart.

So went the time away, and toward the latter part of May and the beginning of June I used to take the ladies out driving, hoping that these new circumstances might elicit some show of cordiality in Marion. But this proved a complete failure; for, the closer we were thrown together, the greater seemed her shy reticence, her timid reserve, and her soft and gentle yet persistent manner of keeping me at a distance.

And so, here was I. I had found my Lady of the Ice; yet no sooner had I found her than she withdrew herself to an inaccessible height, and seemed now as far out of my reach as on that eventful morning when I sought her at the hut at Montmorency, and found that she had fled.

Spending so much time as I did at O'Halloran's, I did not see so much of Jack as before; yet he used to drop in from time to time in the morning, and pour forth the sorrows of his soul.

Marion's name he never mentioned. Either he had forgotten all about her, which was not improbable; or the subject was too painful a one for him to touch upon, which also was not improbable; or, finally, her affair became overshadowed by other and weightier matters, which was in the highest degree natural.

His first great trouble arose from the action of Miss Phillips.

He had gone there a second time to call, and had again been told that she was not at home. He turned away vowing vengeance, but in the following morning found that vengeance was out of the question, for he received a parcel, containing all the letters which he had ever written to Miss Phillips, and all the presents that he had ever given her, with a polite note, requesting the return of her letters. This was a blow that he was not prepared for. It struck home. However, there was no help for it—so he returned her letters, and then came to me with all kinds of vague threats.

Such threats, however, could not be carried out; and as for Miss Phillips, she was quite beyond the reach of them. She accepted the situation wonderfully well. She did more—she triumphed over it. In a short time she had others at her feet, prom-
ment among whom was Colonel Blount—a dashing officer, a Victoria Cross, and a noble fellow in every respect. Thus Miss Phillips revenged herself on Jack. She tossed him aside coolly and contemptuously, and replaced him with a man whom Jack himself felt to be his superior. And all this was gall and wormwood to Jack. And, what was more, he was devoured with jealousy.

The worst thing about it all, however, was the crushing blow which it gave to his self-love. I am inclined to think that he was very much taken down, on one occasion, when I informed him incidentally that Marion was in excellent spirits, and was said to be in better health than she had known for years. Miss Phillips’s policy, however, was a severer blow. For it had all along been his firm belief that his tangled love-affairs could not end without a broken heart, or melancholy madness, or life-long sorrow, or even death, to one or more of his victims. To save them from such a fate, he talked of suicide. All this was highly romantic, fearfully melodramatic, and even mysteriously tragic. But, unfortunately for Jack’s self-conceit, the event did not coincide with these highly-colored views. The ladies refused to break their hearts. Those organs, however susceptible and tender they may have been, beat bravely on. Number Three viewed him with indifference. Miss Phillips coolly and contemptuously cast him off, and at once found new consolation in the devotion of another. Broken hearts! Melancholy madness! Life-long sorrow! Not they, indeed. They didn’t think of him. They didn’t confide their wrongs to any avenger. No brother or other male relative sent Jack a challenge. He was simply dropped. He was forgotten. Now any one may see the chagrin which such humiliation must have caused to one of Jack’s temper.

And how did the widow treat Jack all this time? The widow! She was sublime; for she showed at once the fostering care of a mother, and the forgiveness of a saint. Forgiveness? That’s not the word. I am wrong. She showed nothing of the kind. On the contrary, she evinced no consciousness whatever that any offence had been committed. If Jack had deceived her as to Miss Phillips, she showed no knowledge of such deceit; if he had formed other entanglements of which he had never told her, she never let him know whether she had found out or not; if Jack went every evening to console himself with Louie, any discovery which the widow may have made of so very interesting yet transparent a fact was never alluded to by her. Such was the lofty ground which the widow took in reference to Jack and his affairs, and such was the manner with which she viewed him and them—a manner elevated, serene, calm, untroubled—a manner always the same. For she seemed above all care for such things. Too high-minded, you know. Too lofty in soul, my boy, and all that sort of thing. Like some tall cliff that rears its awful form, swells from the vale, and midway cleaves the storm, and all the rest of it. Such was the demeanor of the widow Finnimore.

She was so kind and cordial that Jack had not a word to say. After a few days of absence, during which he had not dared to call on her, he had ventured back, and was greeted with the gentlest of reproaches for his neglect, and was treated with an elaboration of kindness that was positively crushing. So he had to go, and to keep going. She would not suffer a single cloud to arise between them. An unvarying sweetness diffused itself evermore over her very pretty face, and through all the tones of her very musical voice. And so Jack was held fast, bound by invisible yet infrangible
bonds, and his soul was kept in complete subjection by the superior ascendancy of the widow.

So he went to see her every day. About six, generally dined there. Always left at eight, or just as dinner was over. Not much time for tenderness, of course. Jack didn't feel particularly inclined for that sort of thing. The widow, on the other hand, did not lay any stress on that, nor did she allow herself to suspect that Jack was altogether too cold for a lover. Not she. Beamimg, my boy. All smiles, you know. Always the same. Glad to see him when he came—a pleasant smile of adieu at parting. In fact, altogether a model fiancee, such as is not often met with in this vale of tears.

Now always, after having this good, kind, smiling, cordial, pretty, clever, fascinating, serene, accomplished, hospitable, and altogether unparalleled widow, Jack would calmly, quietly, and deliberately go over to the Bertons', and stay there as long as he could. What for? Was he not merely heaping up sorrow for himself in continuing so ardently this Platonic attachment? For Louie there was no danger. According to Jack, she still kept up her teasing, quizzing, and laughing mood. Jack's break-up with Miss Phillips was a joke. He had confided to her that he had also broken off with Number Three; and, though she could not find out the cause, this became another joke. Finally, his present attitude with regard to the widow was viewed by her as the best joke of all. She assured him that the widow was to be his fate, and that she had driven the others from the field, so as to have him exclusively to herself.

And thus Jack alternated and vibrated between the widow and Louie, and all his entanglements were now reduced to these two.

Such is a full, frank, fair, free, ample, lucid, and luminous explanation of the progress of affairs, which explanation was necessary in order to make the reader fully understand the full meaning of what follows.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JACK'S TRIBULATIONS.—THEY RISE UP IN THE VERY FACE OF THE MOST ASTONISHING GOOD FORTUNES.—FOR, WHAT IS LIKE A LEGACY?—AND THIS COMES TO JACK!—SEVEN THOUSAND POUNDS STERLING PER ANNUM!—BUT WHAT'S THE USE OF IT ALL?—JACK COMES TO GRIEF!—WOE! SORROW! DESPAIR! ALL THE WIDOW!—INFATUATION.—A MAD PROPOSAL.—A MADMAN, A LUNATIC, AN IDIOT, A MARCH HARE, AND A HATTER, ALL ROLLED INTO ONE, AND THAT ONE THE LUCKY YET UNFORTUNATE JACK.

Jack had been falling off more and more. I was taken up with the O'Hallorans; he, with those two points between which he oscillated like a pendulum; and our intercourse diminished, until at length days would intervene without a meeting between us.

It was in the middle of June.

I had not seen Jack for more than a week.

Suddenly, I was reminded of him by a startling rumor that reached my ears after every soul in the garrison and in the city had heard it. It referred to Jack. It was nothing about the widow, nothing about Louie, nothing about Marion, nothing about Miss Phillips.

It did not refer to duns.

He had not been nabbed by the sheriff.

He had not put an end to himself.

In short, the news was, that an uncle of his had died, and left him a fortune of un-
known proportions. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*, of course; and so up went Jack's fortune to twenty thousand a year. Jack had told me about that uncle, and I had reason to know that it was at least six or seven thousand; and, let me tell you, six or seven thousand pounds per annum isn't to be laughed at.

So here was Jack—raised up in a moment—far above the dull level of debt, and duns, and despair; raised to an upper and, I trust, a better world, where swarms of duns can never arise, and bailiffs never come; raised, my boy, to a region of serene delight, where, like the gods of Epicurus, he might survey from his cloudless calm the darkness and the gloom of the lower world. A fortune, by Jove! Seven thousand pounds sterling a year! Hard cash! Why, the thing fairly took my breath away. I sat down to grapple with the stupendous thought. Aha! where would the duns be now? What would those miserable devils say now, that had been badgering him with lawyers' letters? Wouldn't they all haul off? Methought they would. Methought! why, meknew they would—me fancied how they would fawn, and cringe, and apologize, and explain, and lick the dust, and offer to polish his noble boots, and present themselves for the honor of being kicked by him. Nothing is more degrading to our common humanity than the attitude of a creditor toward a poor debtor—except the attitude of that same creditor, when he learns that his debtor has suddenly become rich.

Having finally succeeded in mastering this great idea, I hurried off to Jack to congratulate him.

I found him in his room. He was lying down, looking very blue, very dismal, and utterly used up. At first, I did not notice this, but burst forth in a torrent of congratulations, shaking his hand most violently. He raised himself slightly from the sofa on which he was reclining, and his languid hand did not return my warm grasp, nor did his face exhibit the slightest interest in what I said. Seeing this, I stopped short suddenly.

"Hallo, old boy!" I cried. "What's the matter? Any thing happened? Isn't it true, then?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, dolefully, leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, and looking at the floor.

"Well, you don't seem very jubilant about it. Any thing the matter? Why, man, if you were dying, I should think you'd rise up at the idea of seven thousand a year."

Jack said nothing.

At such a check as this to my enthusiastic sympathy, I sat in silence for a time, and looked at him. His elbows were on his knees, his face was pale, his hair in disorder, and his eyes were fixed on the wall opposite with a vacant and abstracted stare. There was a haggard look about his handsome face, and a careworn expression on his broad brow, which excited within me the deepest sympathy and sadness. Something had happened—something of no common kind. This was a something which was far, very far, more serious than those old troubles which had oppressed him. This was something far different from those old perplexities—the entanglements with three engagements. Amid all those he was nothing but a big, blundering baby; but now he seemed like a sorrow-stricken man. Where was the light of his eyes, the glory of his brow, the music of his voice? Where was that glow that once used to pervade his fresh, open, sunny face? Where! It was Jack—but not the Jack of old. It was Jack—but
to his face, and his eyes looked brighter; but he had still the same haggard aspect. "I'm in for it, Macrorie," said he at last, gloomily.

"In for it?"

"Yes—an infernal scrape."

"What?"

"The widow—damn her!" and he struck his clinched fist against the head of the sofa.

"In for it? The widow?" I repeated. "What do you mean?"

Jack drew a long breath, and regarded me with a fixed stare.

"I mean," said Jack, fixing his eyes upon me with an awful look, "I mean this—that I have to marry that woman."

"Marry her?"

"Yes," he exclaimed, dashing his fist upon the table savagely, "marry her! There you have it. I'm in for it. No escape. Escape—ha! ha! Nabbed, sir. All up! Married and done for—yes, eternally done for!"

He jerked these words out in a fierce, feverish way; and then, flinging himself back, he clasped his knees with his hands, and sat regarding me with stern eyes and frowning brow.

This mood of Jack's was a singular one. He was evidently undergoing great distress of mind. Under such circumstances as these, no levity could be thought of. Had he not been so desperate, I might have ventured upon a jest about the widow driving the others from the field and coming forth victorious; but, as it was, there was no room for jest. So I simply sat in silence, and returned his gaze.

"Well?" said he at last, impatiently.

"Well?" said I.

"Haven't you got anything to say about that?"

"I don't know what to say. Your ma-
So I haven't thought of telling this takes me more by surprise than the thing itself. After all, you must have looked forward to this."

"Looked forward? I'll be hanged if I did, except in a very general way. Damn it, man! I thought she'd have a little pity on a fellow, and allow me some liberty. I didn't look forward to being shut up at once."

"At once? You speak as though the event were near."

"Near? I should think it was. What do you say to next week? Is that near or not? Near? I should rather think so."

"Next week? Good Lord! Jack, do you really mean it? Nonsense!"

"Next week,—yes—and worse—on Tuesday—not the end, but the beginning, of the week—Tuesday, the 20th of June."

"Tuesday, the 20th of June!" I repeated, in amazement.

"Yes, Tuesday, the 20th of June," said Jack.

"Heavens, man! what have you been up to? How did it happen? Why did you do it? Couldn't you have postponed it? It takes two to make an agreement. What do you mean by lamenting over it now? Why didn't you get up excuses? Haven't you to go home to see about your estates? Why, in Heaven's name, did you let it be all arranged in this way, if you didn't want it to be?"

Jack looked at me for a few moments very earnestly.

"Why didn't I?" said he, at length; "simply because I happen to be an unmitigated, uncontrollable, incorrigible, illimitable, and inconceivable ass! That's the reason why, if you must know."

Jack's very forcible way of putting this statement afforded me no chance whatever of denying it or combating it. His determination to be an ass was so vehement, that remonstrance was out of the question. I therefore accepted it as a probable truth.

For some time I remained silent, looking at Jack, and puffing solemnly at my pipe. In a situation of this kind, or in fact in any situation where one is expected to say something, but doesn't happen to have any thing in particular to say, there's nothing in the world like a pipe. For the human face, when it is graced by a pipe, and when the pipe is being puffed, assumes, somehow, a rare and wonderful expression of profound and solemn thought. Besides, the presence of the pipe in the mouth is a check to any overhasty remark. Vain and empty words are thus repressed, and thought, divine thought, reigns supreme. And so as I sat in silence before Jack, if I didn't have any profound thoughts in my mind, I at least had the appearance of it, which after all served my purpose quite as well.

"I don't mind telling you all about it, old chap," said Jack, at last, who had by this time passed into a better frame of mind, and looked more like his old self.

"You've known all about the row, all along, and you'll have to be in at the death, so I'll tell you now. You'll have to help me through—you'll be my best man, and all that sort of thing, you know—and this is the best time for making a clean breast of it, you know: so here goes."

Upon this Jack drew a long breath, and then began:

"I've told you already," he said, "how abominably kind she was. You know when I called on her after the row with Miss Phillips, how sweet she was, and all that, and how I settled down on the old terms. I hadn't the heart to get up a row with her, and hadn't even the idea of such a thing. When a lady is civil, and kind, and all that, what can a fellow do? So you see
I went there as regular as clock-work, and dined, and then left. Sometimes I went at six, and stayed till eight; sometimes at five, and stayed till nine. But that was very seldom. Sometimes, you know, she'd get me talking, and somehow the time would fly, and it would be ever so late before I could get away. I'm always an ass, and so I felt tickled, no end, at her unfailing kindness to me, and took it all as so much incense, and all that—I was her deity, you know—snuffing up incense—receiving her devotion—feeling half sorry that I couldn't quite reciprocate, and making an infernal fool of myself generally.

"Now you know I'm such a confounded ass that her very reticence about my other affairs, and her quiet way of taking them, rather piqued me; and several times I threw out hints about them, to see what she would say. At such times she would smile in a knowing way, but say nothing. At last there was one evening—it was a little over a week ago—I went there, and found her more cordial than ever, more amusing, more fascinating—kinder, you know, and all that. There was no end to her little attentions. Of course all that sort of thing had on me the effect which it always has, and I rapidly began to make an ass of myself. I began to hint about those other affairs—and at last I told her I didn't believe she'd forgiven me."

Here Jack made an awful pause, and looked at me in deep solemnity.

I said nothing, but puffed away in my usual thoughtful manner.

"The moment that I said that," continued Jack, "she turned and gave me the strangest look. 'Forgiven you,' said she; 'after all that has passed, can you say that?'

"'Well,' I said, 'you don't seem altogether what you used to be—.'"
ever, and so I rushed headlong to destruc-
tion."

Here Jack paused, and looked at me de-
spairingly.

"Well?" said I.

"Well?" said he.

"Go on," said I. "Make an end of it.
Out with it! What next?"

Jack gave a groan.

"Well—you see—somehow—I went on
—and before I knew it there I was offer-
ing to marry her on the spot—and—heav-
ens and earth! Macrorie—wasn't it a sort
of judgment on me—don't you think?—
I'd got used to that sort of thing, you know
—offering to marry people off hand, you
know, and all that—and so it came natural
on this occasion; and I suppose that was
how it happened, that before I knew what I
was doing I had pumped out a violent and
vehement entreaty for her to be mine at
once.—Yes, at once—any time—that even-
ing—the next day—the day after—no mat-
ter when. I'll be hanged if I can say now
whether at that moment I was really sin-
cere or not. I'm such a perfect and fin-
ished ass, that I really believe I meant
what I said, and at that time I really
wanted her to marry me. If that con-
founded chaplain that goes humbugging
about there all the time had happened to
be in the room, I'd have asked him to tie
the knot on the spot. Yes, I'll be hanged
if I wouldn't! His not being there is the
only reason, I believe, why the knot wasn't
tied. In that case I'd now be Mr. Finni-
more—no, by Jove—what rot!—I mean I'd
now be her husband, and she'd be Mrs.
Randolph—confound her!"

Jack again relapsed into silence. His
confession was a difficult task for him, and
it came hard. It was given piecemeal, like
the confession of a murderer on the day
before his execution, when his desire to cen-
fess struggles with his unwillingness to re-
call the particulars of an abhorrent deed,
and when after giving one fact he delays
and falters, and lapses into long silence be-
fore he is willing or able to give another.

"Well, after that," he resumed, at last,
"I was fairly in for it—no hope, no going
back—no escapes—trapped, my boy—
 nabbed—gone in forever—head over heels,
and all the rest of it. The widow was
affected by my vehemence, as a matter of
course—she stammered—she hesitated, and
of course, being an ass, I was only made
more vehemence by all that sort of thing,
you know. So I urged her, and pressed
her, and then, before I knew what I was
about, I found her coyly granting my insane
request to name the day."

"Oh, Jack! Jack! Jack!" I exclaimed.

"Go on," said he. "Haven't you some-
thing more to say? Pitch in. Give it to
me hot and heavy. You don't seem to be
altogether equal to the occasion, Macrorie.
Why don't you hit hard?"

"Can't do it," said I. "I'm knocked
down myself. Wait, and I'll come to time.
But don't be too hard on a fellow. Be
reasonable. I want to take breath."

"Name the day! name the day! name
the day!" continued Jack, ringing the
changes on the words; "name the day!
By Jove! See here, Macrorie—can't you
get a doctor's certificate for me and have
me quietly put in the lunatic asylum before
that day comes?"

"That's not a bad idea," said I. "It
might be managed. It's worth thinking
about, at any rate."

"Wild!" said Jack, "mad as a March
hare, or a hatter, or any other thing of
that sort—ungovernable—unmanageable,
devoid of all sense and reason—what more
do you want? If I am not a lunatic, who
is? That's what I want to know."
"There's a great deal of reason in that," said I, gravely.
"No there isn't," said Jack, pettishly. "It's all nonsense. I tell you I'm a madman, a lunatic, an idiot, any thing else. I don't quite need a strait-jacket as yet, but I tell you I do need the seclusion of a comfortable lunatic asylum. I only stipulate for an occasional drop of beer, and a whiff or two at odd times. Don't you think I can manage it?"
"It might be worth trying," said I. "But trot on, old fellow."
Jack, thus recalled to himself, gave another very heavy sigh.
"Where was I?" said he. "Oh, about naming the day. Well, I'll be hanged if she didn't do it. She did name the day. And what day do you think it was that she named? What day! Good Heavens, Macrorie! Only think of it. What do you happen to have to say, now, for instance, to the 20th of June? Hey? What do you say to next Tuesday? Tuesday, the 20th of June! Next Tuesday! Only think of it. Mad! I should rather think so."
I had nothing to say, and so I said nothing.
At this stage of the proceedings Jack filled a pipe, and began smoking savagely, throwing out the puffs of smoke fast and furious. Both of us sat in silence, involved in deep and anxious thought—I for him, he for himself.
At last he spoke.
"That's all very well," said he, putting down the pipe, "but I haven't yet told you the worst."
"The worst?"
"Yes; there's something more to be told—something which has brought me to this. I'm not the fellow I was. It isn't the widow; it's something else. It's—\n
CHAPTER XXXV.


"It's Louie!" said Jack again, after a pause. "That's the 'hinc illae lachrymæ' of it, as the Latin grammar has it."
"Louie?" I repeated.
"Yes, Louie," said Jack, sadly and solemnly.
I said nothing. I saw that something more was coming, which would afford the true key to Jack's despair. So I waited in silence till it should come.
"As for the widow herself," said Jack, meditatively, "she isn't a bad lot, and, if it hadn't been for Louie, I should have taken all this as an indication of Providence that my life was to be lived out under her guidance; but then the mischief of it is, there happens to be a Louie, and that Louie happens to be the very Louie that I can't manage to live without. You see there's no nonsense about this, old boy. You may remind me of Miss Phillips and Number Three, but I swear to you solemnly they were both nothing compared with Louie. Louie is the only one that ever has fairly taken me out of myself, and fastened herself to all my thoughts, and hopes, and desires. Louie is the only one that has ever chained me to her in such a way that I never wished to leave her for anybody else. Louie! why, ever since I've
known her, all the rest of the world and of womankind has been nothing, and, beside her, it all sank into insignificance. There you have it! That's the way I feel about Louie. These other scrapes of mine—what are they? Bosh and nonsense, the absurdities of a silly boy! But Louie! why, Macrorie, I swear to you that she has twined herself around me so that the thought of her has changed me from a calf of a boy into a man. Now I know it all. Now I understand why I followed her up so close. Now, now, and now, when I know it all, it is all too late! By Jove, I tell you what it is, I've talked like a fool about suicide, but I swear I've been so near it this last week that it's not a thing to laugh at."

And Jack looked at me with such a wild face and such fierce eyes that I began to think of the long-talked-of head-stone of Anderson's as a possibility which was not so very remote, after all.

"I'll tell you all about it," said he. "It's a relief. I feel a good deal better already after what I have said.

"You see," said he, after a pause, in which his frown grew darker, and his eyes were fixed on vacancy—"you see, that evening I stayed a little later than usual with the widow. At last I hurried off. The deed was done, and the thought of this made every nerve tingle within me. I hurried off to see Louie. What the mischief did I want of Louie? you may ask. My only answer is: I wanted her because I wanted her. No day was complete without her. I've been living on the sight of her face and the sound of her voice for the past two months and more, and never fairly knew it until this last week, when it has all become plain to me. So I hurried off to Louie, because I had to do so—because every day had to be completed by the sight of her.

"I reached the house somewhat later than usual. People were there. I must have looked different from usual. I know I was very silent, and I must have acted queer, you know. But they were all talking, and playing, and laughing, and none of them took any particular notice. And so at last I drifted off toward Louie, as usual. She was expecting me. I knew that. She always expects me. But this time I saw she was looking at me with a very queer expression. She saw something unusual in my face. Naturally enough. I felt as though I had committed a murder. And so I had. I had murdered my hope—my love—my darling—my only life and joy. I'm not humbugging, Macrorie—don't chaff, for Heaven's sake!"

I wasn't chaffing, and had no idea of such a thing. I was simply listening, with a very painful sympathy with Jack's evident emotion.

"We were apart from the others," he continued, in a tremulous voice. "She looked at me, and I looked at her. I saw trouble in her face, and she saw trouble in mine. So we sat. We were silent for some time. No nonsense now. No laughter. No more teasing and coaxing. Poor little Louie! How distressed she looked! Where was her sweet smile now? Where was her laughing voice? Where was her bright, animated face—her sparkling eyes—her fun—her merriment—her chaff? Poor little Louie!"

And Jack's voice died away into a moan of grief.

But he rallied again, and went on:

"She asked me what was the matter. I told her—nothing. But she was sure that something had happened, and begged me to
tell her. So I told her all. And her face, as I told her, turned as white as marble. She seemed to grow rigid where she sat. And, as I ended, she bent down her head—and she pressed her hand to her forehead—and then she gave me an awful look—a look which will haunt me to my dying day—and then—and then—she—she burst into tears—and, oh, Macrorie—oh, how she cried!

And Jack, haying stammered out this, gave way completely, and, burying his face in his hands, he sobbed aloud.

Then followed a long, long silence.

At last Jack roused himself.

"You see, Macrorie," he continued, "I had been acting like the devil to her. All her chaff, and nonsense, and laughter, had been a mask. Oh, Louie! She had grown fond of me—poor miserable devil that I am—and this is the end of it all!

"She got away," said Jack, after another long silence—"she got away somehow; and, after she had gone, I sat for a while, feeling like a man who has died and got into another world. Paralyzed, bewildered—take any word you like, and it will not express what I was. I got off somehow—I don't know how—and here I am. I haven't seen her since.

"I got away," he continued, throwing back his head, and looking vacantly at the ceiling—"I got away, and came here, and the next day I got a letter about my uncle's death and my legacy. I had no sorrow for my poor dear old uncle, and no joy over my fortune. I had no thought for any thing but Louie. Seven thousand a year, or ten thousand, or a hundred thousand, whatever it might be, it amounts to nothing. What I have gained is nothing to what I have lost. I'd give it all for Louie. I'd give it all to undo what has been done. I'd give it all, by Heaven, for one more

sight of her! But that sight of her I can never have. I dare not go near the house. I am afraid to hear about her. My legacy! I wish it were at the bottom of the Atlantic. What is it all to me, if I have to give up Louie forever? And that's what it is!"

There was no exaggeration in all this. That was evident. Jack's misery was real, and was manifest in his pale face and general change of manner. This accounted for it all. This was the blow that had struck him down. All his other troubles had been laughable compared with this. But from this he could not rally. Nor, for my part, did I know of any consolation that could be offered. Now, for the first time, I saw the true nature of his sentiments toward Louie, and learned from him the sentiments of that poor little thing toward him. It was the old story. They had been altogether too much with one another. They had been great friends, and all that sort of thing. Louie had teased and given good advice. Jack had sought consolation for all his troubles. And now—lo and behold!—in one moment each had made the awful discovery that their supposed friendship was something far more tender and far-reaching.

"I'll never see her again!" sighed Jack.

"Who?" said L. "The widow?"

"The widow!" exclaimed Jack, contemptuously; "no—poor little Louie!"

"But you'll see the widow?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, dryly. "I'll have to be there."

"Why not kick it all up, and go home on leave of absence?"

Jack shook his head despairingly.

"No chance," he muttered—"not a ghost of a one. My sentence is pronounced; I must go to execution. It's my own doing, too. I've given my own word."
"Next Tuesday?"
"Next Tuesday."
"Where?"
"St. Malachi's."
"Oh, it will be at church, then?"
"Yes."
"Who's the parson?"
"Oh, old Fletcher."
"At what time?"
"Twelve; and see here, Macrorie, you'll stand by a fellow—of course—won't you? see me off—you know—adjust the noose, watch the drop fall—and see poor Jack Randolph launched into—matrimony!"
"Oh, of course."
Silence followed, and soon I took my departure, leaving Jack to his meditations and his despair.

CHAPTER XXXVI.


Jack's strange revelation excited my deepest sympathy, but I did not see how it was possible for him to get rid of his difficulty. One way was certainly possible. He could easily get leave of absence and go home, for the sake of attending to his estates. Once in England, he could sell out, and retire from the army altogether, or exchange into another regiment. This was certainly possible physically; but to Jack it was morally impossible.

Now, Jack has appeared in this story in very awkward circumstances, engaging himself right and left to every young lady that he fancied, with a fatal thoughtlessness, that cannot be too strongly reprehended. Such very diffusive affection might argue a lack of principle. Yet, after all, Jack was a man with a high sense of honor. The only difficulty was this, that he was too susceptible. All susceptible men can easily understand such a character. I'm an awfully susceptible man myself, as I have already had the honor of announcing, and am, moreover, a man of honor—consequently I feel strongly for Jack, and always did feel strongly for him.

Given, then, a man of very great susceptibility, and a very high sense of honor, and what would he do?

Why, in the first place, as a matter of course, his too susceptible heart would involve him in many tendernesses; and, if he was as reckless and thoughtless as Jack, he would be drawn into inconvenient entanglements; and, perhaps, like Jack, before he knew what he was about, he might find himself engaged to three different ladies, and in love with a fourth.

In the second place, his high sense of honor would make him eager to do his duty by them all. Of course, this would be impossible. Yet Jack had done his best. He had offered immediate marriage to Miss Phillips, and had proposed an elopement to Number Three. This shows that his impulses led him to blind acts which tended in a vague way to do justice to the particular lady who happened for the time being to be in his mind.

And so Jack had gone blundering on until at last he found himself at the mercy of the widow. The others had given him up in scorn. She would not give him up. He was bound fast. He felt the bond. In the midst of this his susceptibility drove him
on further, and, instead of trying to get out of his difficulties, he had madly thrust himself further into them.

And there he was—doomed—looking forward to the fateful Tuesday.

He felt the full terror of his doom, but did not think of trying to evade it. He was bound. His word was given. He considered it irrevocable. Flight? He thought no more of that than he thought of committing a murder. He would actually have given all that he had, and more too, for the sake of getting rid of the widow; but he would not be what he considered a sneak, even for that.

There was, therefore, no help for it. He was doomed. Tuesday! June 20th! St. Malachi's! Old Fletcher! Launched into matrimony! Hence his despair.

During the intervening days I did not see him. I did not visit him, and he did not come near me. Much as I sympathized with him in his woes, I knew that I could do nothing and say nothing. Besides, I had my own troubles. Every time I went to O'Halloran's, Marion's shyness, and reserve, and timidity, grew more marked. Every time that I came home, I kept bothering myself as to the possible cause of all this, and tormented myself as to the reason of such a change in her.

One day I called at the Bertons'. I didn't see Louie. I asked after her, and they told me she was not well. I hoped it was nothing serious, and felt relieved at learning that it was nothing but a "slight cold." I understood that. Poor Louie! Poor Jack! Would that "slight cold" grow worse, or would she get over it in time? She did not seem to be of a morbid, moping nature. There was every reason to hope that such a one as she was would surmount it. And yet it was hard to say. It is often these very natures—buoyant, robust, healthy, straightforward—which feel the most. They are not impressionable. They are not touched by every new emotion. And so it sometimes happens that, when they do feel, the feeling lasts forever.

Tuesday, at last, came—the 20th—the fated day!

At about eleven o'clock I entered Jack's room, prepared to act my part and stand by his side in that supreme moment of fate.

Jack was lying on the sofa, as I came in. He rose and pressed my hand in silence. I said nothing, but took my seat in an easy-chair. Jack was arrayed for the ceremony in all respects, except his coat, instead of which garment he wore a dressing-gown. He was smoking vigorously. His face was very pale, and, from time to time, a heavy sigh escaped him.

I was very forcibly struck by the strong resemblance which there was between Jack, on the present occasion, and a condemned prisoner before his execution. So strong was this, that, somehow, as I sat there in silence, a vague idea came into my head that Jack was actually going to be hanged; and, before I knew where my thoughts were leading me, I began to think, in a misty way, of the propriety of calling in a clergyman to administer ghostly consolation to the poor condemned in his last moments. It was only with an effort that I was able to get rid of this idea, and come back from this foolish, yet not unnatural fancy, to the reality of the present situation. There was every reason, indeed, for such a momentary misconception. The sadness, the silence, the gloom, all suggested some prison cell; and Jack, prostrate, stricken, miserable, mute, and despairing, could not fail to suggest the doomed victim.

After a time Jack rose, and, going to the sideboard, offered me something to drink. I declined. Whereupon he poured
out a tumblerful of raw brandy and hastily swallowed it. As he had done that very same thing before, I began to think that he was going a little too far.

"See here, old boy," said I, "aren't you a little reckless? That sort of thing isn't exactly the best kind of preparation for the event—is it?"

"What?—this?" said Jack, holding up the empty tumbler, with a gloomy glance toward me; "oh, its nothing. I've been drenching myself with brandy this last week. It's the only thing I can do. The worst of it is, it don't have much effect now. I have to drink too much of it before I can bring myself into a proper state of calm."

"Calm!" said I, "calm! I tell you what it is, old chap, you'll find it'll be any thing but calm. You'll have delirium tremens before the week's out, at this rate."

"Delirium tremens?" said Jack, with a faint, cynical laugh. "No go, my boy—too late. Not time now. If it had only come yesterday, I might have had a reprieve. But it didn't come. And so I have only a tremendous headache. I've less than an hour, and can't get it up in that time. Let me have my swing, old man. I'd do as much for you."

And, saying this, he drank off a half tumbler more.

"There," said he, going back to the sofa. "That's better. I feel more able to go through with it. It takes a good lot now, though, to get a fellow's courage up."

After this, Jack again relapsed into silence, which I ventured to interrupt with a few questions as to the nature of the coming ceremony. Jack's answers were short, reluctant, and dragged from him piecemeal. It was a thing which he had to face in a very short time, and any other subject was preferable as a theme for conversation.

"Will there be much of a crowd?"
"Oh, no."
"You didn't invite any."
"Me? invite any? Good Lord! I should think not!"
"Perhaps she has?
"Oh, no; she said she wouldn't."
"Well, I dare say the town, by this time, has got wind of it, and the church'll be full."

"No, I think not," said Jack, with a sigh.

"Oh, I don't know; it's not a common affair."

"Well, she told me she had kept it a secret—and you and Louie are the only ones I've told it to—so, unless you have told about it, no one knows."

"I haven't told a soul."

"Then I don't see how anybody can know, unless old Fletcher has proclaimed it."

"Not he; he wouldn't take the trouble."

"I don't care," said Jack, morosely, "how many are there, or how few. Crowd or no crowd, it makes small difference to me, by Jove!"

"Look here, old fellow," said I, suddenly, after some further conversation, "if you're going, you'd better start. It's a quarter to twelve now."

Jack gave a groan and rose from his sofa. He went into his dressing-room and soon returned, in his festive array, with a face of despair that was singularly at variance with his costume. Before starting, in spite of my remonstrances, he swallowed another draught of brandy. I began to doubt whether he would be able to stand up at the ceremony.

St. Malachi's was not far away, and a few minutes' drive brought us there.
The church was quite empty. A few stragglers, unknown to us, had taken seats in the front pews. Old Fletcher was in the chancel. We walked up and shook hands with him. He greeted Jack with an affectionate earnestness of congratulation, which, I was sorry to see, was not properly responded to.

After a few words, we all sat down in the choir.

It wanted about five minutes of the time.

The widow was expected every moment. Old Fletcher now subsided into dignified silence. I fidgeted about, and looked at my watch every half-minute. As for Jack, he buried his face in his hands and sat motionless.

Thus four minutes passed.

No signs of the widow.

One minute still remained.

The time was very long.

I took out my watch a half-dozen times, to hasten its progress. I shook it impatiently to make it go faster. The great empty church looked cold and lonely. The little group of spectators only added to the loneliness of the scene. An occasional cough resounded harshly amid the universal stillness. The sibilant sounds of whispers struck sharply and unpleasantly upon the ear.

At last the minute passed.

I began to think my watch was wrong; but no—for suddenly, from the great bell above, in the church-tower, there tolled out the first stroke of the hour. And between each stroke there seemed a long, long interval, in which the mind had leisure to turn over and over all the peculiarities of this situation.

One! I counted.

[No widow. What's up? Did any one ever hear of a bride missing the hour, or delaying in this way?]

Two!

[What a humbug of a woman! She has cultivated procrastination all her life, and this is the result.]

Three!

[Not yet. Perhaps she wants to make a sensation. She anticipates a crowded church, and will make an entrance in state.]

Four!

[But no; she did not invite anybody, and had no reason to suppose that any one would be here.]

Five!

[No, it could not be vanity; but, if not, what can be the possible cause?]

Six!

[Can it be timidity, bashfulness, and all that sort of thing? Bosh! The widow Finnamore is not a blushing, timid maiden.]

Seven!

[Perhaps her watch is out of the way. But, then, on one's marriage-day, would not one see, first of all, that one's watch was right?]

Eight!

[Perhaps something is the matter with her bridal array. The dress might not have arrived in time. She may be waiting for her feathers.]

Nine!

[Not yet! Perhaps she is expecting Jack to go to her house and accompany her here. It is very natural Jack may have agreed to do so, and then forgotten all about it.]

Ten!

[Perhaps there has been some misunderstanding about the hour, and the widow is not expecting to come till two.]

Eleven!

[Perhaps she is ill. Sudden attack of vertigo, acute rheumatism, and brain-fever, consequent upon the excitement of the
At last old Fletcher turned to Jack.
"You said twelve, I think, sir," said he, mildly and benevolently.
"Twelve—did I? Well—of course; why not? Twelve, of course."
"The lady is rather behind the time, I think—isn't she?" said the reverend gentleman, with mild suggestiveness.
"Behind the time?" said Jack, fumbling at his watch; "why, so she is; why, it's twenty minutes to one. By Jove!"
"Perhaps you mistook the hour," hinted the clergyman.
"The hour? I'm as confident it was twelve as I'm confident of my existence. Not a bit of doubt about that."
"Perhaps something's happened," said I; "hadn't I better drive round to the house, Jack?"
"Yes; not a bad idea," said Jack. "I'll go too. I can't stand it any longer. I've read the ten commandments through seventy-nine times, and was trying to work up to a hundred, when you interrupted me. Do you know, old chap—I feel out of sorts; that brandy's got to my head—I'd like a little fresh air. Besides, I can't stand this waiting any longer. If it's got to be—why, the sooner the better. Have it out—and be done with it, I say. A fellow don't want to stand all day on the scaffold waiting for the confounded hangman—does he?"

Jack spoke wildly, cynically, and desperately. Old Fletcher listened to these words with a face so full of astonishment and horror, that it has haunted me ever since. And so we turned away, and we left that stricken old man looking after us in amazement and horror too deep for words.

Jack's spirits had flushed up for a moment into a fitful light; but the next mo
ment they sank again into gloom. We walked slowly down the aisle, and, as we passed down, the spectators, seeing us go out, rose from their seats with the evident conviction that the affair was postponed, and the determination to follow. Jack's carriage was at the door, and we drove off.

"Macrorie, my boy," said Jack.

"What?"

"You didn't bring your flask, I suppose," said Jack, gloomily.

"No," said I; "and it's well I didn't, for I think you've done enough of that sort of thing to-day."

"To-day? This is the day of all days when I ought. How else can I keep up? I must stupefy myself, that's all. You don't know, old boy, how near I am to doing something desperate."

"Come, Jack, don't knock under that way. Confound it, I thought you had more spirit."

"Why the deuce does she drive me mad with her delay?" cried Jack, a few minutes after. "Why doesn't she come and be done with it? Am I to spend the whole day waiting for her? By Jove, I've a great mind to go home, and, if she wants me, she may come for me."

"Do," said I, eagerly. "She's missed the appointment; why should you care?"

"Pooh! a fellow can't act in that sort of way. No. I've it out. I've acted badly enough, in a general way, but I won't go deliberately and do a mean thing. I dare say this sort of thing will wear off in the long run. We'll go to England next week. We'll start for New York to-night, and never come back. I intend to try to get into the 178th regiment. It's out in Bombay, I believe. Yes. I've made up my mind to that. It's the only thing to be done. Yes—it's the best thing—for the best for both of us."

"Both of you!"

"Both, yes; of course."

"What, you and the widow?"

"The widow? Confound the widow! Who's talking of her?"

"I thought you were talking of her. You said you were going to take her to England."

"The widow? No," cried Jack, peevishly; "I meant Louie, of course. Who else could I mean? Louie. I said it would be far better for me and Louie if I went to Bombay."

And with these words he flung himself impatiently back in the carriage and scowled at vacancy.

And this was Jack. This was my broad-browed, frank-faced, golden-haired, bright, smiling, incoherent, inconsistent, inconsequential, light-hearted, hilarious Jack—the Jack who was once the joy of every company, rollicking, reckless, and without a care. To this complexion had he come at last. Oh, what a moral ruin was here, my countrymen! Where now were his jests and gibes—his wit, that was wont to set the table in a roar? Alas! poor Yorick! Amour! amour! quand tu nous tiens, who can tell what the mischief will become of us! Once it was "not wisely but too many"—now it was "not wisely but too well"—and this was the end of it. O Louie! O Jack! Is there no such thing as true Platonic love on earth?

But there was not much time for Jack to scowl or for me to meditate. The widow did not live very far away, and a quarter of an hour was enough to bring us there.

It was a handsome house. I knew it well. Jack knew it better. But it looked dark now, and rather gloomy. The shutters were closed, and there was no sign of life whatever.

Jack stared at the house for a moment,
and then jumped out. I followed. We hurried up the steps, and Jack gave a fierce pull at the bell, followed by a second and a third.

At the third pull the door opened and disclosed a maid-servant.

"Mrs. Finnimore?" said Jack, as he stepped into the hall—and then stopped. The servant seemed surprised.

"Mrs. Finnimore?" said she.

"Yes," said Jack. "Is she here?"

"Here?"

"Yes."

"Why, sir—she's gone—"

"Done!" cried Jack. "Done! Impossible! Why we drove straight here from St. Malachi's, and didn't meet her. Which street did she go?"

"Which street, sir? St. Malachi's, sir?" repeated the servant, in bewildernment.

"Yes—which way did she go?"

"Why, sir—she went to Montreal," said the servant—"to Montreal, you know, sir," she repeated, in a mincing tone, bridling and blushing at the same time.

"To—where? what?" cried Jack, thunderstruck—"Montreal! Montreal! What the devil is the meaning of all that?"

And Jack fairly gasped, and looked at me in utter bewilderment. And I looked back at him with emotions equal to his own. And we both stood, to use an expressive but not by any means classical word—dumb-founded.

[Had a thunder-bolt burst—and all that sort of thing, you know, my boy.]

Jack was quite unable to utter another word. So I came to his help.

"I think you said your mistress went to Montreal?" said I, mildly and encouragingly, for the servant began to look frightened.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you be kind enough to tell me what she went there for? I wouldn't ask you, but it's a matter of some importance."

"What for, sir?" said the servant—and a very pretty blush came over her rather pretty face. "What for, sir? Why, sir—you know, sir—she went off, sir—on her—her—wedding-tower, sir."

"Her what?!" cried Jack, wildly.

"Her wedding-tower, sir," repeated the servant, in a faint voice.

"Her wedding-tower! cried Jack. "Her wedding-tower! Do you mean what you say? Is this a joke? What do you mean?"

At this, which was spoken most vehemently by Jack, who was now in a state of frightful excitement, the servant turned pale and started back in fear—so I interposed.

"Don't be at all alarmed," I said, kindly. "We merely want to know, you know, what you mean by saying it was a wedding-tour. What wedding? We want to know, you know."

"Wedding, sir? Lor', sir! Yes, sir. This morning, sir. She was married, you know, sir."

"MARRIED!" cried Jack, in a strange, wild voice.

"This morning!" I exclaimed.

"Lor', sir! Yes, sir," continued the maid, who was still a little frightened at the presence of such excited visitors. "This morning, sir. Early, sir. Six o'clock, sir. And they took the seven o'clock train, sir—for Montreal, you know, sir—and they talked of New York, sir."

"They talked? They? Who? Married! Who married her? The widow! Mrs. Finnimore! Married! Nonsense! And gone! What do you mean? Who was it?"

The maid started back in fresh fear at Jack's terrible agitation. Terrible? 
should rather think so. Imagine a criminal with the noose about his neck hearing a whisper going about that a pardon had arrived. Agitation? I should say that there was occasion for it. Still, I didn't like to see that pretty servant-maid frightened out of her wits. So I interposed once more.

"We merely want to know," said I, mildly, "who the gentleman was to whom your mistress was married this morning, and with whom she went to Montreal?"

"Who, sir? Why, sir—it was the chaplain, sir—of the Bobtails, sir—the Rev. Mr. Trenaman."

"The Chaplain!!" cried Jack, with a strange voice that was somewhere between a shout and a sob. He turned to me. There was ecstacy on his face. His eyes were all aglow, and yet I could see in them the moisture of tears. He caught my hand in both of his.

"Oh, Macorrie!" he faltered, "see here, old boy—it's too much—Louie—all right—at last—too much, you know."

And the long and the short of it is, he nearly wrung my hand off.

Then he turned to the servant-maid, and fumbling in his pockets drew out a handful of sovereigns—

"See here!" he said, "you glorious little thing! you princess of servant-maids! here's something for a new bonnet, you know, or anything else you fancy."

And he forced the sovereigns into her hand.

Then he wrung my hand again.

Then he rushed wildly out.

He flung some more sovereigns at the astonished coachman.

Then he sprang into the carriage, and I followed.

"Where shall I drive to, sir?" said the coachman.

"To Colonel Berton's!" roared Jack.

"Nonsense, Jack!" said I; "it's too early."

"Early—the devil! No it isn't.—Drive on."

And away went the carriage.

I prevailed on Jack to drop me at the corner of one of the streets, and, getting out, I went to my den, meditating on the astonishing events of the day.

The conclusions which I then came to about Mrs. Finnimore, now Mrs. Trenaman, were verified fully by discoveries made afterward.

She had been quick-sighted enough to see that Jack did not care for her, and had given him up. The chaplain was far more to her taste. As Jack came again to her, she could not resist the desire to pay him up. This was the reason why she led him on to an offer of matrimony, and named the day and place. Miss Phillips had paid him up in one way; the widow chose another method, which was more in accordance with her own genius. All this time she had come to a full understanding with the chaplain, and the day which she had named to Jack was the very one on which her real marriage was to come off. I never could find out whether the chaplain knew about it or not. I rather think he did not. If he had known, he would have dropped a hint to Jack. He was such a confoundedly good-hearted sort of a fellow, that he would have interposed to prevent the success of the plan. As it was, it was carried out perfectly.

After all, she wasn't a bad little thing. She knew about Jack's devotion to Louie, and thought that her little 'plot, while it gratified her own feelings, would not in any way interfere with Jack's happiness. And it didn't. For, ever since then, Jack has never ceased to declare that the widow
as he still called her, was—a brick—a
trump—a glorious lot—and every other
name that has ever been invented to ex-
press whatever is noble, excellent, or ad-
mirable in human nature.

The next morning Jack came bursting
into my room. One look at him was
enough. Jack was himself again. He
poured forth a long, a vehement, and a
very incoherent account of his proceed-
ings. I can only give the general facts.

He had driven at once to Colonel Ber-
ton's. He had dashed into the house and
asked for Louie. After a while Louie came
down. He didn't say a word to her, but
cought her in his arms. She didn't resist.
Perhaps she had seen in his face, at one
glance, that he was free. It was a long
time before the absurd fellow could tell her
what had happened. At length he man-
gaged to get it all out. He must have acted
like a madman, but, as all lovers are more
or less mad, his behavior may not have
seemed very unnatural to Louie. The poor
little girl had been moping ever since her
last interview with Jack; every day had
made it worse for her; and Jack assured
me that, if he hadn't turned up at that par-
ticular hour on that particular day, she
would have taken to her bed, and never
risen from it again. But as it was Jack's
inveterate habit to doom to death all the
ladies who had cherished a tender passion
in his behalf, the assertion may not be ab-
solutely true. Louie might possibly have
rallied from the blow, and regained the
joy and buoyancy of her old life; yet,
however that may be, it was certainly best
for her that things should have turned out
just as they did.

But I must now leave Jack, and get on
to—

CHAPTER XXXVII

MY OWN AFFAIRS.—A DRIVE AND HOW IT
CAME OFF.—VARYING MOODS.—THE EX-
CITED, THE GLOOMY, AND THE GENTLEMANLY.
—STRAYING ABOUT MONTMORENCY.—REVIS-
ITING A MEMORABLE SCENE.—EFFECT OF
SAID SCENE.—A MUTE APPEAL AND AN AP-
PEAL IN WORDS.—RESULT OF THE APPEALS.
—"WILL YOU TURN AWAY?"—GRAND RE-
SULT.—CLIMAX.—FINALE.—A GENERAL UN-
DERSTANDING ALL ROUND, AND A UNIVER-
SAL EXPLANATION OF NUMEROUS PUZZLES.

All this was very well. Of course, To
a generous nature like mine, the happiness
of a friend could not fail to extend itself.
For I'm awfully sympathetic, you know. I
don't remember whether I've made that re-
mark before or not, but in either case the
fact remains. Yet, sympathetic or not,
every fellow has his own affairs, you know,
and, as a matter of course, these engage
his chief attention. Now all my affairs
circled around one centre, and that centre
was—Marion!

I had seen her on the previous evening.
I had made an engagement with her and
Nora to go out with me for a drive on the
following day, and we had arranged all
about it. We were to drive to Montmo-
rency Falls, a place which is the chief at-
traction among the environs of Quebec. I
had not been there since that memorable
day when I rode there with the doctor to
find my bird flown.

Accordingly on the next day, at the ap-
pointed hour, I drew up in front of O'Hal-
loran's and went in. The ladies were there,
but Nora was half-reclining on a couch,
and seemed rather miserable. She com-
plained of a severe attack of neuralgia,
and lamented that she could not go. Up
on this I expressed my deepest regrets, and hoped that Miss O'Halloran would come. But Marion demurred, and said she wouldn't leave Nora. Whereupon Nora urged her to go, and finally, after evident reluctance, Marion allowed herself to be persuaded.

It was with an inexpressible feeling of exultation that I drove off with her. At last we were alone together, and would be so for hours. The frigidity which had grown up within her during the last two months might possibly be relaxed now under the influence of this closer association. My heart beat fast. I talked rapidly about every thing. In my excitement I also drove rapidly at first, but finally I had sufficient sense to see that there was no need to shorten so precious an interview by hurrying it through, and so I slackened our speed.

As for Marion, she seemed as calm as I was agitated. Her demeanor was a singular one. She was not exactly frigid or repellent. She was rather shy and reserved. It was rather the constraint of timidity than of dislike. Dislike? No. Not a bit of it. Whatever her feelings might be, she had no reason for dislike. Still she was cold—and her coldness began gradually to affect me in spite of my exultation, and to change my joy to a feeling of depression.

After a few miles this depression had increased sufficiently to sober me down completely. I no longer rattled. I became grave. A feeling of despondency came over me. My spirits sank. There seemed no sympathy between us—no reciprocity of feeling. She had no cordiality of manner—no word, or look, or gesture, to give encouragement.

After a time my mood changed so under the influence of Marion's depressing manner, that I fell into long fits of very ungallant silence—silence, too, which she never attempted to break. Amid these fits of silence I tried to conjecture the cause of her very great coolness, and finally came to the very decision which I had often reached before. "Yes," I thought, "she has discovered how I love her, and she does not care for me. She has gratitude, but she cannot feel love. So she wishes to repel me. She didn't want to come with me, and only came because Nora urged her. She did not like to refuse, for fear of seeming unkind to me. At the same time, now that she is with me, she is trying to act in such a way as will effectually quell any unpleasant demonstrations of mine." Thoughts like these reduced me to such a state of gloom that I found myself indulging in fits of silence that grew longer and longer.

At last I roused myself. This sort of thing would never do. If nothing else could influence me, I felt that I ought to obey the ordinary instincts of a gentleman. I had invited her for a drive, and, because she was constrained, that was no reason why I should be rude. So I rallied my failing faculties, and endeavored now not to secure enjoyment for myself, but rather to make the drive agreeable to my companion.

This better mood lasted all the rest of the way, and the few miles of feverish excitement, which were followed by the few miles of sullenness, were finally succeeded by the ordinary cheerfulness of a travelling companion. The change was very much for the better. My feverish excitement had served to increase the constraint of Marion; and now, since it had passed away, she seemed more inclined to be agreeable. There were many things to attract and interest those who travelled merely for the pleasure of the thing, without any ulterior motives. The long French
villages, the huge chapels, the frequent crosses by the way-side, the smooth, level road, the cultivated fields, the overshadowing trees, the rich luxuriance of the vegetation, the radiant beauty of the scene all around, which was now clothed in the richest verdure of June, the habitants along the road—all these and a thousand other things sufficed to excite attention and elicit remarks. While I was impassioned, or eager, or vehement, Marion had held aloof; but now, while I was merely common-place and conventional, she showed herself sufficiently companionable. And so our drive went on, and at last we reached our destination.

If I were inclined to bore the reader, I might go into raptures over this scene—where the river, winding on amid wooded banks, and over rocky ledges, finally tumbles over a lofty precipice, and flings itself in foam into the St. Lawrence; where the dark cliffs rise, where the eddies twirl and twist, where the spray floats upward through the span of its rainbow arch. But at that moment this scene, glorious though it was, sank into insignificance in my estimation in comparison with Marion. I will take it for granted that the reader, like me, finds more interest in Marion than in Montmorency, and therefore will not inflict upon him any description of the scene. I refer him to Byron's lines about Velino. They apply with equal force to Montmorency.

Well. To resume.

We wandered about Montmorency for an hour or more. We walked over the broad, flat ledges. We descended deep slopes. We climbed lofty rocks. I helped her over every impediment. I helped her down. I helped her up. She had to take my hand a hundred times in the course of that scramble.

There was an informal and an unconventional character about such proceedings as these which did much toward thawing the crust of Marion's reserve. She evidently enjoyed the situation—she enjoyed the falls—she enjoyed the rocky ledges—she enjoyed the scramble—she even went so far on one occasion as to show something like enthusiasm. Nor did I, in the delight of that time, which I experienced to the most vivid degree, ever so far forget myself as to do the impassioned in any shape or way. Whatever was to be the final result, I had determined that this day should be a happy one, and, since Marion objected so strongly to the intense style, she should see nothing but what was simply friendly and companionable.

But it was a hard struggle. To see her beautiful, animated face—her light, agile form—to feel her little hand—to hear the musical cadence of her unequalled voice, and yet to repress all undue emotion. By Jove! I tell you what it is, it isn't every fellow who could have held out as long as I did.

At last we had exhausted the falls, and we went back to the little inn where the horses were left. We had still over an hour, and I proposed a walk to the river-bank. To this Marion assented.

We set out, and I led the way toward that very cottage where I had taken her on that memorable occasion when I first met her. I had no purpose in this, more than an irresistible desire to stand on that bank by her side, and, in company with her, to look over that river, and have the eyes of both of us simultaneously looking over the track of our perilous journey. And still, even with such a purpose as this, I resolved to discard all sentiment, and maintain only the friendly attitude.

The cottage was not far away, and, in a short time, we entered the gate of the
farm, and found ourselves approaching it.

As we went on, a sudden change came over Marion.

Up to the time of our entering the gate she had still maintained the geniality of manner and the lightness of tone which had sprung up during our wanderings about the falls. But here, as we came within sight of the cottage, I saw her give a sudden start. Then she stopped and looked all around. Then she gave a sudden look at me—a deep, solemn, earnest look, in which her dark, lustrous eyes fastened themselves on mine for a moment, as though they would read my very soul.

And at that look every particle of my commonplace tone, and every particle of my resolution, vanished and passed away utterly.

The next instant her eyes fell. We had both stopped, and now stood facing one another.

"Pardon me," said I, in deep agitation.
"I thought it might interest you. But, if you wish it, we may go back. Shall we go back, or shall we go on?"

"As you please," said she, in a low voice.

We went on.

We did not stop at the cottage. We passed by it, walking in silence onward toward the river-bank. We reached it at last, and stood there side by side, looking out upon the river.

We were at the top of a bank which descended steeply for a great distance. It was almost a cliff, only it was not rock, but sandy soil, dotted here and there with patches of grass and clumps of trees. Far below us was the river, whose broad bosom lay spread out for miles, dotted with the white sails of passing vessels. The place where we stood was a slight promontory, and commanded a larger and more extended view than common. On the left and below us was the Ile d'Orleans, while far away up the river Cape Diamond jutted forth, crowned by its citadel, and, clustering around it, we saw the glistening tin roofs and tapering spires of Quebec. But at that moment it was neither the beauty nor the grandeur of this wonderful scene that attracted my gaze, but rather the river itself. My eyes fastened themselves on that broad expanse of deep and dark-blue water, and wandering from the beach beneath, up the river, to the shore opposite Quebec—many a mile away—in that moment all the events of our memorable journey came back before me, distinctly and vividly. I stood silent. Marion, too, was silent, as though she also had the same thoughts as those which filled me. Thus we both stood in silence, and for a long time our eyes rested upon the mighty river which now rolled its vast flood beneath us, no longer ice-bound, but full and free, the pathway for mighty navies, and the thoroughfare of nations.

Now I was able to grasp the full and complete reality of our fearful adventure. We had wandered from the opposite shore far up near Point Levi, toiling over treacherous ice, which, even as we walked, had moved onward toward the sea, and had thus borne us down for miles till we attained the shore at this place. Looking at the river, I could trace the pathway which we had taken, and could fix the locality of every one of those events which had marked that terrible journey—where the horse ran—where the sleigh floated—where I had drawn it to the ice—where the ice-ridge rose—where we had clambered over—where Marion fell—till finally beside this shore I could see the place where that open channel ran, near which she had fallen.
for the last time, when I had raised her in my arms and borne her back to life. And there, too, below us, was the steep bank up which I had borne her—how I knew not, but in some way or other most certainly—till I found refuge for her in the hospitable cottage. At this last I looked with the strongest emotion. What strength must have been mine! what a frenzied, frantic effort I must have put forth! what a madness of resolve must have nerved my limbs to have carried her up such a place as that! In comparison with this last supreme effort all the rest of that journey seemed weak and commonplace.

Rousing myself at last from the profound abstraction into which I had fallen, I turned and looked at my companion.

She was standing close beside me; her hands hung in front of her, closed over one another; her head was slightly bent forward; her eyes were opened wide, and fixed steadfastly upon the river at the line which we might have traversed; and there was in her face such rapt attention, such deep and all-absorbed meditation, that I saw her interest in this scene was equal to mine. But there was more than interest. There was that in her face which showed that the incidents of that journey were now passing before her mind; her face even now assumed that old expression which it had borne when first I saw her—it was white, horror-stricken, and full of fear—the face that had fixed itself on my memory after that day of days—the face of my Lady of the Ice.

She did not know that I was looking at her, and devouring her with my gaze. Her eyes wandered over the water and toward the shore. I heard her quick breathing, and saw a sudden shudder pass through her, and her hands clutch one another more tightly in a nervous clasp, as she came to that place where she had fallen last. She looked at that spot on the dark water for a long time, and in visible agitation. What had taken place after she had fallen she well knew, for I had told it all on my first visit to her house, but it was only from my account that she knew it. Yet here were the visible illustrations of my story—the dark river, the high, precipitous bank. In all these, as in all around, she could see what I had done for her.

Suddenly, with a start, she raised her head, and, turning, looked full upon me. It was a wild, eager, wistful, questioning look—her large, lustrous eyes thrilled me through with their old power; I saw in her face something that set my heart throbbing with feverish madness. It was a mute appeal—a face turned toward me as though to find out by that one eager, piercing, penetrating glance, something that she longed to know. At the same time there was visible in her face the sign of another feeling contending with this—that same constraint, and shy apprehension, and timidity, which had so long marked her manner toward me.

And now, in that moment, as her face thus revealed itself, and as this glance thrilled through me, there flashed upon my mind in a moment the meaning of it all. There was but an instant in which she thus looked at me—the next instant a flush passed over her face, and her eyes fell, but that very instant I snatched her hand in both of mine and held it.

She did not withdraw it. She raised her eyes again, and again their strange questioning thrilled through me.

"Marion," said I, and I drew her toward me. Her head fell forward. I felt her hand tremble in mine.

"Marion," said I—lingering fondly on the name by which I now called her for
the first time—"if I ask you to be mine—will you turn away?"

She did not turn away.

She raised her face again for a moment, and again for a moment the thrilling glance flashed from her deep, dark eyes, and a faint smile of heavenly sweetness beamed across the glory of her solemn face.

There!
I let the curtain drop.
I'm not good at describing love-scenes, and all that sort of thing, you know.
What's more, I don't want to be either good or great at that.

For, if a fellow feels like a fool, you know, when he's talking spooney, how much more like a fool must he feel when he sits down and deliberately writes spooney! You mustn't expect that sort of thing from me at any rate—not from Macrorie. I can feel as much as any fellow, but that's no reason why I should write it all out.

Another point.
I'm very well aware that, in the story of my love, I've gone full and fair against the practice of the novelist. For instance, now, no novelist would take a hero and make him fall in love with a girl, no matter how deucedly pretty she might be, who had been in love with another fellow, and tried to run off with him. Of course not.

Very well. Now, you see, my dear fellow, all I've got to say is this, that I'm not a novelist. I'm an historian, an autobiographe, or any thing else you choose. I've no imagination whatever. I rely on facts, I can't distort them. And, what's more, if I could do so, I wouldn't, no matter what the taste or fashion of the day might be.

There's a lot of miserable, carping sneeks about, whose business it is to find fault with every thing, and it just occurs to me that some of this lot may take it into their heads—notwithstanding the facts, mind you—may take it into their heads, I say, to make the objection that it is unnatural, when a girl has already been so madly in love, for another fellow to win her affections in so short a time. Such fellows are beneath notice, of course; but, for the benefit of the world at large, and humanity in general, I beg leave to suggest a few important points which serve to account for the above-mentioned change of affection, and all that sort of thing:

I. The mutability of humanity.
II. The crushing effects of outrage and neglect on the strongest love.
III. My own overwhelming claims.
IV. The daily spectacle of my love and devotion.
V. My personal beauty.
VI. The uniform of the Bobtails.
The above, I think, will suffice.

The drive back was very different from the drive down. On the way I heard from Marion's own lips a full explanation of many of those things which had been puzzling me for the last two months. She explained all about the crossing of the river, though not without some hesitation, for it was connected with her infatuation about Jack. Still, she had got over that utterly, and, as I knew all about it, and as she had nothing but indifference toward him, I was able to get an explanation from her without much difficulty.

It seems, then, that O'Halloran had forbidden Marion to see Jack, but she was infatuated about him, and anxious to see him. She had met him several times at the house of a friend at Point Levi, and a few days before that eventful journey O'Halloran had gone to Montreal. At the same time Jack had written her, telling her that he would be over there. So she took advantage of
her father's absence to go over on a visit, hoping also to meet with Jack. But Jack was not there. She stayed as long as she dared, and finally had to return so as to be home before her father got back. This was the day of the storm. She had much difficulty in finding a driver, but at length succeeded by means of a heavy bribe. Then followed her momentous meeting with me. Her departure from the cottage so abruptly was owing to her intense desire to get home before her father should arrive. This she succeeded in doing. She felt deeply grateful to me, but did not dare to take any steps to show gratitude, for fear her father would hear of her journey to Point Levi, Nora knew about it, and kept her secret from O'Halloran most faithfully. Then came my arrival upon the scene. She recognized me at once, and as soon as I told my story Nora recognized me, too, as Marion's mysterious deliverer.

They held counsel together after leaving the room, and, seeing O'Halloran's fancy for me, they thought I might often come again. They saw, too, that I had noticed their agitation, but had not recognized Marion. They judged that I would suspect them, and so Nora volunteered to personate the lady so as to save Marion from that outburst of indignation which was sure to fall on her if her father knew of her disobedience. This, then, was the cause of Nora's assumption of a false part. She had told some plausible story to O'Halloran which satisfied him and saved Marion; but her peculiar frank and open nature made her incapable of maintaining her part, and also led to my absurd proposal to her, and its consequences.

Meanwhile Marion had her troubles. She had not seen Jack, but on her return got his frantic letter, proposing an elopement, and threatening to blow his brains out. She answered this as we have seen. After this, she heard all about Jack's love-affairs, and wrote to him on the subject. He answered by another proposal to elope, and reproached her with being the cause of his ruin. This reproach stung her, and filled her with remorse. It was not so much love as the desperation of self-reproach which had led to her foolish consent. So at the appointed time she was at the place; but instead of Jack—there was quite another person.

Of course, I did not get all the above from her at that time. Some of it she told; but the rest came out long afterward. Long afterward I learned from her own dear lips how her feelings changed toward me, especially on that night when I saved her and brought her home. Jack became first an object of contempt, then of indifference. Then she feared that I would despise her, and tried to hold aloof. Despise her!——!!!

All this, and a thousand other things, came out afterward, in the days of our closer association, when all was explained, and Marion had no more secrets to keep from me, and I had none from her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BRIDES. — STRANGE ASSOCIATION OF THE
BRITISH OFFICER AND THE FENIAN. — JACK
AND MACRORIE, LOUIS AND MARION. — BRIDES
AND BRIDEGROOMS. — EPITHALAMIAM. — WEDDING IN HIGH LIFE. — SIX OFFICIATING CLERGYMEN. — ALL THE ELITE OF QUEBEC TAKE PART. — ALL THE CLERGY, ALL THE MILITARY, AND EVERYBODY WHO AMOUNTS TO ANY THING. — THE BAND OF THE BOBTAILS DIS-
COURISING SWEET MUSIC, AND ALL THAT SORT
OF THING, YOU KNOW.

On reading over the above heading, I find it so very comprehensive that it leaves nothing more for me to say. I will therefore make my bow, and retire from the scene, with my warmest congratulations to the reader at reaching

THE END.
"'HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID."

A Novel.

By Annie Thomas,
(MRS. PENDER CUDLIP),

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.
1873.
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DEDICATED,

BY PERMISSION,

to

LADY ELIZABETH BULTEEL.

Dear Lady Elizabeth,—

One of the pleasantest memories I have of my life in Devon is the intercourse I enjoyed there with you. I shall never cease to be grateful for your friendship and hearty sympathy, and for the warm encouragement which you invariably accorded to my literary efforts. I can only hope you will find that this story is not entirely unworthy of the honor you have allowed me to do it, in inscribing your name on its first page.

I am, dear Lady Elizabeth,

Yours very sincerely,

ANNIE THOMAS CUDLIP.

March, 1873.
CHAPTER I.
MADGE RODEN.

The village lies partly in a shady hot hollow, and partly on a breezy slope that is inclining away to the grand ridges of Exmoor. From some wild deep spring up in those purple heights a river takes its rise, and, after tearing tumultuously through this village of Halsworthy, pours itself a passionate offering into the sea that is lashing the cliffs yonder.

It is July!—rich, sumptuous July. The year has "grown lush in juicy stalks," and the bees are everywhere keeping up a hum about the globes of clover and the waxy-looking pale pink heath that blooms abundantly here. The land is wreathed with flowers, in short; for the soil is fertile, and the love of flowers strong in this locality.

Soft torpor is the normal characteristic of that portion of Halsworthy which nestles away in the hollow. But no unwonted excitement, not to say agitation, reigns there. Halsworthy is about to compete with the great world of which it knows so little in the matter of pleasure. It is going to start a cricket, croquet, and archery club; and it is going to commence proceedings to-day.

There is one name on the tongue of every man, woman, and child in Halsworthy to-day, and that is the name of Miss Roden. The girl finds that life lags more than a little in this sweet sleepy hollow; and so, in her impatience of this lagging, she has at last incited Halsworthy to bestir itself in the matter of amusements.

She has given up the lawn that stretches away in front of her own picturesque, many-gabled house as the ground for the sports. And now she is standing on the steps just outside the porch, watching them decorate the tent that is to be called a "pavilion," and to be the scene of a "thé dansant," with evergreens and purple heather.

She was born and has grown up in this free, invigorating moorland air, and now at twenty she is as full of health and spirit and fearlessness as an Exmoor pony. There is a strong bewitching element of untamed, untrained grace about her, as she suddenly jumps off the steps and walks quickly, without the faintest indication of Grecian bend, to meet a lady who is slowly coming up the drive.

She wears a dress of some thick white material, cut just short enough in front to show her small, shapely feet. The tone of color of any thick white material is enough to ruin the fairest complexion; but, though Madge Roden is never called "fair," it does not ruin hers. Her round straight throat does not look brown, rising even from the collar of such a dress. And as for her face, few people care to criticise the color of a countenance that is bright, merry, and frank as a gratified child's. The roundness of youth has not left her cheeks yet. Her eyes have not learned to drop or lower themselves. She gives back look for look without blushing. Indeed, altogether the bloom is very much on this beautiful peach—this girl on whom no rays that search have ever been allowed to fall.

The lady whom she meets a little way down the drive takes her hand, holds her at arm's length, and scans her critically. When the inspection is over, she says,

"You will do very well, Madge. I like your rose-colored ribbons and feather."

"I tried a dozen colors at least before I settled on rose," Madge answers a trifle repiningly, "and then I felt after all, Who will see me? Who will take the trouble to come to Halsworthy? Mrs. Henderson, do you think any one will accept our challenges? do you think any one will come?"

Mrs. Henderson is forty-five. She has a husband, children, a home, a round of duties that must be done, and a few anxieties. Nevertheless, she has the heart of a woman, and a great love and sympathy for Madge. So she says heartily,

"I hope so, dear—I think so. At any rate, your efforts won't be unrewarded, for you'll have given a great deal of pleasure to your old friends in the village; they will meet here and enjoy themselves even if no strangers come."

Madge has clasped her hands behind her back. There is a comic expression, half amused, half petulant, on her face. The light breeze that comes down from the hill has wafted a few stray locks of her bronze-brown hair away from the confining pins. Her small, oval, eager face is changing its expression every instant. Her lustrous velvet eyes are lifted, with a look in
them that pleads for more sympathy, with her longing for a change, with her craving for something better than she has known. Altogether, though she is not a beauty, Madge Roden is a very attractive specimen of womankind as she stands here, about to play the part of young lady of the land for the first time.

She is an orphan, this girl who owns Moorbridge House and lands; and though she has a brace of guardians, and an old aunt of her father lives with her, she is, to all intents and purposes, as free and unfettered as one of the uncaught Exmoor ponies, to which I compared her just now. For three years she has done very much as she pleases with herself and her two thousand per annum. But her flights have been very circumscribed, and she is longing to try her wings.

All the fashion, youth, and beauty of Halsworthy arrive shortly after Mrs. Henderson. Halsworthy is not densely populated with the upper classes; but still it has its pair of surgeons, its lawyer, and its one retired gentleman who has realized fabulous sums in the city. These all have daughters who are delighted to shoot arrows in the air and play croquet. The sons of these respective families are out in the world, naturally, and Halsworthy knows them not.

Madge hurls herself into the task of entertaining her friends; and, aided by Mr. Henderson (the vicar) and his wife, her dear friend, she is succeeding, when a drag comes up, and the arrival of the "Incogniti," who are to play against the "Gentlemen of West Somerset," is proclaimed. Madge's heart thumps with joy. It is going to be a success, this enterprise of hers. If only the Gentlemen of West Somerset would be good enough to come, all would go merry as a marriage-bell.

They come at last. The first cricket-match of the week is played. The "chê danseur" goes off in a way that makes it a sweet memory among the maidens of Halsworthy forever. And the veil of night descends upon enthusiastic pages of praise and thanksgiving to Miss Roden, the originator of this holiday fête that has been so gloriously inaugurated. When that day's work is quite done, and the evil of forgetfulness can not be remedied, a thought that would have been such a happy one if it had only flashed across Madge's mind in time, comes into it and tantalizes her. And in the act of saying good-night to Mrs. Henderson, she interrupts herself to cry out, "Oh! why didn't you—why didn't you ask your friend's son—that Philip, you know? How could you forget him? and how could I?"

"How remiss—how stupid I am!" Mrs. Henderson is as sincerely sorry and mortified about this omission as Madge herself. "Never mind, Madge," she adds, directly, "I'll write to-morrow; and if he can take a holiday, the good, hard-working fellow, he may be here by Wednesday, and enjoy three days of our jubilee."

After a long search Mrs. Henderson is rewarded by finding the last letter she has received from her old friend Mrs. Fletcher. They have been tender and true friends for thirty years; but life is too full of work for the great majority, for frequent correspondence in these days. This letter is dated two years ago. The address given is Number 20 in one of the insignificant streets in Chelsea, that do not dare to call themselves a portion of Belgravia. Mrs. Henderson reads the letter over again with interest as keen and fresh as when she received it. It is full of the praises of Philip—of the good son and brother, whose quiet, unvaunted heroism wins a blessing from his mother every hour of his life.

Presently she gives a pleased shake of the head, and a well-satisfied smile, and says, "I am justified. A man who has given up a career he loved, as Philip loved the Bar, and has settled down so uncomplainingly to an occupation he must nearly loathe, for his mother's sake, must deserve even my child Madge. I'll ask him down: even his goodness will have its reward, if he wins her for his wife."

So she sits down and writes to Mrs. Fletcher this night, tired as she is, and pleads the cause of the Halsworthy sports and pastimes so cleverly, that it seems as if Philip would be conferring a favor on every one by coming to be a guest at the Vicarage for so long a time as he can take a holiday. And so the first link in the chain of complications which will ensure is forged by one of the kindest, trustiest hands in the world.

* * * * * *

For the first time for the day, the temperature of the front sitting-room in the little house in which the Fletchers live in Chelsea is pleasant, or rather, endurable. It is the day after the inauguration of the Halsworthy sports and pastimes. The evening post is just in, and Mrs. Fletcher—Philip's mother—is in receipt of a letter from her old friend Mrs. Henderson.

Behold her as she sits there in the most comfortable chair in the room—a very old and feeble woman, though she only numbers fifty years. Like her son's, her nervous system is finely organized, and it has had some severe shocks from Fate and Fortune. There is a want of power over her muscles, a lack of physical force that makes her children shrink in pain from any mention of the word "paralysis"—although her incapacity for action and exertion has never been broadly called by that name yet.

Those children are about her now, as she finishes reading Mrs. Henderson's letter, and, tired with the effort, lets it feebly flutter to the floor. Philip, her son, is reading a newspaper. His occupation as head clerk in an important mercantile house does not leave him much time for even press-literature during the hours of the day.

He is a young man of eight-and-twenty; neither grave-looking nor endowed with a disapp
pointed expression, though he has relinquished some hopes in life that have been—and still are—desperately dear to him. He has a power of happiness and enjoyment about him still. Looking at him as he sits there by his mother, his fair hair tossed off his open brow, his eyes sparkling with his keen sense of the humor of something that is only seen by himself, one feels inclined to indorse Mrs. Henderson’s opinion, and declare that he does deserve even such a one as her favorite, the heiress, Madge Roden.

His two sisters, “the girls” as they are called still, though one is twenty-seven and the other twenty-five, are hovering about full of suggestions.

“You might manage it so easily, surely, Phil. Get Roberts to take your work for a week, and give your pupils papers: the holiday would do you so much good.”

“And to feel you were having a holiday would do mamma so much good,” the younger sister pleads. “Chrisey and I would never let her miss you, would we, Chris?”

Chrisy, a determined, good, practical, hard-headed, pretty woman of twenty-seven, takes care.ful stock of all the possibilities before she answers.

“Mamma wouldn’t miss him very much if Cousin Philip said here with us while Phil was away: the change to Phil would do her good, wouldn’t it, mamma?”

“And Cousin Philip is entirely at your service, now and forever,” a refined, full-toned voice says, as a man lounges forward from the darkest corner of the room, and shows himself in the gleam of light that still comes in at the window, without any dread of that light being too fierce for him.

The two girls, Chrisy and Mabel, look at him admiringly, rapturously, gratefully. Philip Fletcher, their own good, true, thoroughly appreciated brother, is cast in a mold that is very agreeable in the eyes of young woman-kind. But this cousin of his is just so much taller, handsomer, finer in every way as forces one to see the difference, even when one does not want to mark it. He is quite as clever, too, as Phil—quite as ambitious, quite as attractive. But he lacks all that patient, gallant spirit of self-abnegation which has made Phil sacrifice himself to his mother’s real tangible comfort. He lacks all the self-control, all the plodding perseverance, all the higher elements of Phil’s nature.

But he is very attractive, very bewildering, very gifted with the power of seeming, and the women are all bewitched by him. Even his old aunt feels as if she could blush with pleasure, when she hears him say that he will willingly stay and play Phil’s part in the household, while Phil goes down to Halsworthy to play croquet and cricket, and to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Henderson’s dear child, Madge Roden.

“Though why that young person should be held out as a bait in these days of strikes, and high prices, and general inability to marry and be happy on nothing a year, is incomprehensible to me,” he says.

And then he learns for a certainty that Miss Roden has two thousand per annum.

It is a dreadful disappointment to the mother, to the sisters (and to the cousin, he himself affirms), but later that night Phil Fletcher comes to the conclusion that he “can’t go to Halsworthy.” Another pupil is looming on his horizon. The senior partner of his house wants to get away to Switzerland early this year. He “doesn’t see his way out of it all till September,” he says; and then he kisses his mother and adds,

“One of the girls must write and tell Mrs. Henderson this as politely as possible, mother. A good thing, too: her child, as she calls this Madge Roden, might entangle herself in my life, and she must fly higher.”

The girls have a very full portion of work allotted to them already, in spite of all Phil’s efforts to smooth their paths. Chrisy keeps the house, and does daily battle with butcher and baker; to say nothing of the hourly combat that goes on between mind and matter, the former being represented by herself, the latter by the cook and house-maid. Chrisy’s time is very fully occupied. She always feels as if so much ground were cut from beneath her feet, when she has to sit down to write a letter. And Mabel, the younger sister, is striving to be independent of “dear, noble, hard-working Phil.” She gives music-lessons from ten till four, and after four, well! she is not inclined to rush into a correspondence with a woman who is to her only “mamma’s old friend Mrs. Henderson.”

But Cousin Philip, the handsome idler about town, of whom utter ruin has been prognosticated by discerning friends a hundred times and more—Cousin Philip, the irresistible scamp of the Fletcher family, comes to the fore on this occasion in a most unprecedented way.

He will write and explain (in his aunt’s name) to Mrs. Henderson that his cousin has no time for Halsworthy, and all the happiness Halsworthy might represent to him. He (in his aunt’s name) undertakes to make the refusal a more gracious thing than the acceptance of the invitation would have been. He (in his aunt’s name) will take care that Phil’s conduct shall shine out more gloriously than ever in Mrs. Henderson’s eyes.

Thus much he declares to the mother and the sisters. To his cousin Phil he simply says,

“I’ll put it all so neatly, old fellow, that you will be able to step into that hospitable Hendersonian home at any time. Look here, Phil, my opinion is not worth much, I’m aware. I’m rather of the vagabond order, I know. But you are right not to fall into a silk net yet: work, work, is the thing for us both. I am off to-morrow, to try to shift for myself at last.”
As he utters this virtuous resolve, he rises and holds out his hand, and Phil grasps it, opening his mouth in amazement the while.

"You work!" he ejaculates.

"Yes, I'm going in for the hardest work I've ever done in my life. Shake hands, old boy, and say good-bye to your mother and sisters for me."

Phil Fletcher hears a pupil in the hall; he has no time to be astonished at his cousin's determination. He says rapidly, as he is arranging his papers for the evening,

"I hope you put it smoothly to Mrs. Henderson: she may be a useful friend to the girls. I wish she'd give them the chance of a holiday there; but it's as likely as not that we don't hear of her for another half century."

"As likely as not," Cousin Philip rejoins. Then he says good-bye once more, rather brokenly, and goes and kisses his aunt and bids the girls farewell.

For all these arrangements a fresh impetus is given to the Halsworthy hilarities on Wednesday night by the introduction of Mr. Philip Fletcher.

Mrs. Henderson takes him up to Moorbridge House herself, and specially presents him to the young presiding deity. "He's his mother's son, dear—that's the only claim he has on my regard," she whispers to Madge; but she adds, as Madge is turning away,

"He's as good as he's good-looking, dear; I dare venture to tell you that. This holiday is the first he has had for years, and he half repents having taken it now. My own girls are darlings, but I do envy my old friend that son."

"Yet he isn't quite what I expected to see," Madge says, a little wistfully: "he's so handsome, and his goodness sits so easily upon him. His sisters must like him very much. And how good of you to get him! for I have so many young girls to think of, haven't I?"

This from the fair chatelaine of twenty. Surely Philip Fletcher's lines are cast in pleasant places!

CHAPTER II.
OLIVE AVELAND'S ERROR.

The Thursday following Philip Fletcher's arrival is the best, brightest, most beautiful day of the Halsworthy week so far. The houses of all the clergy and gentry, for ten miles round, are filled with guests, and these, together with their entertainers, flock to the lawn of the head-centre of all this gayety, Miss Roden herself.

Her friends from the Vicarage are with her very early, and Madge soon finds herself consulting Mr. Fletcher rather hambly about many things over which she had assumed the sole control before he came. For a man whose whole grown-up life has been given to engrossing business (engrossing though distasteful), he is surprisingly well up in all that pertains to athletic sports, pastimes, amusements of every kind. "And he doesn't vaunt his familiarity with them at all—it just seems to slip out against his will," Madge tells Mrs. Henderson toward the end of the day, when Philip has carried off the stranger's honors in a flat-race.

Old Miss Roden, the great-aunt who takes care of Madge and manages (!) Moorbridge House (she really believes that she does both these things, thanks to Madge's tact and kind-heartedness), is out on the lawn in an arm-chair under the bright green sweeping branches of a deciduous cypress. All those visitors who are of sufficient note in the neighborhood have been presented to the lady who is in authority over pleasant Madge Roden. To Madge's great delight, her aunt has invited a great number of people to finish the evening in Moorbridge House on this happy day.

"The young people can dance till twelve, and then we will have supper," she said, when she issued her invitations the day before to the happy many who have been chosen. And all this she has done of her own accord, and not at Madge's instigation.

Presently those who are to remain troop in joyfully, and every bed and dressing room in spacious Moorbridge House is soon full of merry young people intent on making the best of themselves. Only Madge lingers out on the lawn still, saying a few more words to her friends, the Hendersons, who are going home to dress.

"Don't rely on my coming back, Madge," Mrs. Henderson says. "I'm but a weak mortal, and the temptation to stay at home and be cool and comfortable all the evening may overcome me."

"Fancy any one abstaining from dancing!" Madge says pityingly, as they saunter slowly toward the entrance-gate. "I'm tired now; if I'd nothing to look forward to, my feet would ache horribly, and I should be asleep in two minutes; but, as it is, my feet are only throb-bing to dance, and I do wonder at your thinking of coolness and comfort and home, when you have an opportunity of flying round double time to Olive Aveland's playing."

The four are walking abreast as Madge says this, and Mrs. Henderson answers,

"You dear exhauxiatingly unfatigued person, you had better go in and dress now, or you'll be a laggard hostess—as bad a thing in a woman as it is for a man to be a laggard in love or war; isn't it, Philip?"

The vicar's wife turns kindly to include her old friend's son in the conversation; and as her eyes fall on him, she exclaims, "Philip, you have overdone yourself to-day;" for Philip Fletcher seems to be almost staggering as he walks.

"Yes," he says, rather faintly, "this sudden burst after my sedentary life—it tries a fellow; and you were right, Miss Roden: when that ball..."
struck my foot, it gave me a harder blow than I confessed to."

"Oh!" Madge cries, full of a feeling that is half pity for him, and half fear that this handsome young stranger may not be able to dance all the round dances with his lame foot. "Oh! do come into the house, and have your things sent up; do save yourself the walk; he must, mustn't he, Mrs. Henderson?"

"It would be wise to do it," both the Hendersons tell him; but his foot gets instantaneously better, and he insists on going back to the Vicarage; and Madge at last goes in to dress with a feeling that it will be a great blow to the beauty of this entertainment of theirs, if the flower of the manhood here assembled must be a wall-flower.

Madge is no laggard. In clouds of rose-colored gauze that shade away to white nearly, she is springing down the stairs before any of the guest-chambers give forth their renovated occupants. All the walls of Moorbridge House are paneled with finely veneered and polished wood, that was cut on the estate two centuries ago. It is all sombre and superb; but the bright young figure, that glances from room to room so swiftly, seems to make it all radiant at once.

Flowers droop in hanging baskets from every corner and every ceiling. Flowers on pedestals, in pyramids, on brackets, render every available corner gorgeous and fragrant. But not a bloom there is sweeter, brighter, or purer than the girl who owns them all—the frank-faced, light-hearted, pleasure-loving little heiress.

Suddenly there comes toward this Queen Rose of the rose-bud garden of girls a glorious contrast to her, in the form of as perfect an Amber Witch as the eyes of men have ever beheld. The two figures increase their speed as they approach one another. The rose-colored gauze floats over the folds of an amber-hued silk; the round clear-complexioned cheek of bonnie Madge is pressed by the crimson lips and the ivory-white cheek of a tall, dark, lissom-figured girl, whose movements are supple and seductive as a serpent's.

"You dear Olive, to have come after all: isn't this all jolly!" Madge (who has not been trained down to be reticent on the subject of the charms of her own house) exclaims.

"It's all very delightful, Madge," the newcomer says, carelessly; "but you know that I think it a pity that all these people should be coming in to spoil it: I hate these gatherings!"

She says these last words with such an increase of force and emphasis as proves that she means them. She gives an impatient gesture, too, and sits down abruptly on a sofa, and twists a bracelet round her arm roughly.

"It's so good of you to have come, as you do hate it all so," Madge says, ruefully: "no one plays as you do, and I should have been obliged to give up dancing myself and strum for them, if you hadn't been so kind; but I shall feel so selfish if you don't seem to enjoy it at all."

Olive Aveland laughs a little contemptuously. "Even you can't work a miracle, Madge; but I'll tell you this for your comfort, dear. If I sit with my back to the congregation and my face to the piano all the evening, and you keep people from speaking to me, I shall be as happy here as I should have been in Mrs. Wilmot's school-room."

"I can't keep them from speaking to you; and why should I, when every one admires you so, and longs to be introduced to you—"

"Tell them that I'm Mrs. Wilmot's governess," Olive interrupts; "say that there's something suspicious about the way I refuse to speak about my life before I came here; say what you like, only save me from being beset by any one."

She is unquestionably a handsome, high-bred looking girl, this one who rises up now trembling a little from the effects of the vehemence with which she has spoken. A dark-haired handsome girl, with a pale face that tells falsehoods if its owner has not suffered a wealth of disappointment and sorrow in her time, however easily the world may be wagging with her now. There is a good deal of something that is not, perhaps, absolute defiance in her manner and expression. It is not absolute defiance. It is more a conviction that she will shortly be attacked, and an impatient readiness to defend herself. But people who are not given to drawing delicate distinctions between attributes which differ greatly, though on the surface they resemble one another slightly, fall into the error of fancying her largely endowed with the quality of defiance, and a rather presuming person altogether for her position.

As she stands now, still playing with the bracelet that clasps her tender arm, with a half-averted face, and a well-developed expression of "not wishing to be one of them," as Madge and old Miss Roden receive the friends who come trooping in, more than one glance falls upon her with pronounced, compelled admiration. She would ornament any room—any station—any age! For she has not only beauty, but style and cultivation.

And yet she is only the "governess" in Mrs. Wilmot's family, and Mrs. Wilmot is the wife of a quick-brained, purse-proud solicitor, who tells Olive every day that "she's handsome enough to pick and choose something better than a pauper parson." And yet she has not the option of "picking and choosing" as he declares, for with all her beauty and her looks of breed, men do not go down before her as the few who have seen Madge Roden already have gone down before that bright young person.

She is only the governess at Mrs. Wilmot's; and to-night she is here to play the piano without intermission, while a score of girls who can't hold a candle to her whirl and frisk about in waltzes and galops. It is a wayward fate
hers. But wayward as it is, there is something in her face and bearing that hints even to a casual observer that she can battle with it. And wayward as it is, at this moment when we meet with her first, she would not change it for any other that she can think of. This is the way she words her dissatisfied contentedness to herself as she superciliously surveys the society that comes joyously trooping into Madge Roden's drawing-room.

By-and-by, after half a hundred jubilant ejaculations of satisfaction that mean nothing at all, Madge the rose-colored and socially appointed Success, finds herself close to that Amber witch whose witchcraft has never won her a good reward yet. And Madge says exultantly:

"You'll have to come out of your strong-hold of indifference to every thing directly, Olive; Mrs. Henderson is going to bring a young man! Imagine a young man at Moorbridge House."

"Brought men are never nice," Olive says, calmly twiddling her onyx bracelets; "but any thing that appears under Mrs. Henderson's auspices must be rather better than the rest of the world. What is she going to bring?"

"You call him 'any thing' and 'what,'" Madge says, rapidly; "but when you see him you'll like him—I do."

Olive—the recipient of this announcement—tries to laugh lightly—tries to seem to listen—tries to run her fingers over the keys carelessly, and fails in doing all these things, she is so miserably uninterested in the young man who is to appear under Mrs. Henderson's auspices.

The fact is that the poor girl, for all her design aspect and eighteen-shilling-a-yard silk, is distraught by a petitfoggng anxiety. What ought she to give to that glib, lissom maid of Madge's who pulled out the train of her amber silk for her, and adjusted one contumacious tress of silky dusky hair? And further, what a wretched cold she will catch, and how the night dews will ruin her dress if the Wilmots send the open square cart for her.

"What's he called?" she asks vaguely, in reference to that last remark of Madge's. And Madge says, as she sails away on a moderately good partner's arm,

"Oh! didn't I tell you—Philip Fletcher?"

It would be evident to every one in the room, if Miss Aveland's face was only turned roomward, that something in the sound of that name strikes upon her strongly. But whether pleasantly or un pleasurably it is difficult to tell. However, her position at the piano saves her—mercifully saves her—from any scrutiny. And, as she goes on playing as cleverly as ever, her emotion passes unobserved.

Then comes a lull presently. Girls who have partners wander into the room where refreshments await them. Girls who are without partners, but who are also hot and thirsty, try to look as if they had no tantalizing thoughts of the iced Champagne and water their luckier comppeers are drinking. At this juncture Olive, who has regained her composure, turns round and looks steadily round the room.

Mrs. Henderson is just coming in. Kindly, clever, trustworthy Mrs. Henderson; the one matron in the district who has had the power of melting away a portion of Olive's reserve. She comes in alone, and Olive experiences a bitter sense of disappointment, very much to her own annoyance. Her first question, as Mrs. Henderson shakes hands with her, is,

"Are you here alone?"

"Yes; unfortunately our visitor injured his ankle this morning; my husband is staying with him."

"Madge Roden will be sorry, she expected a Mr. Philip Fletcher," Olive says, venturing to pronounce the name that has the sweetest, saddest sound in the world to her.

"Yes, I must look for her and tell my bad news. I wish he had been here; even you would have admitted that he is a Triton among minnows." Then, half laughing at herself the while, Mrs. Henderson goes on to say: "You'll soon find out that he is my weak point, Olive; I loved him dearly for his mother's sake, before I knew him, now I love him nearly as well as I do Madge; my old friend has known tribulation enough, but she is recompensed for every thing by the devotion of such a son as Phil."

Olive, in the midst of a sudden, crushing revulsion of feeling, grasps this fact—namely, that she has made a mistake, and that the Philip Fletcher she has been half hoping, half fearing, to see is not the one who is staying at Mrs. Henderson's. The Philip Fletcher who made life a howling wilderness for her for awhile had no living mother to have her heart stabbed by his conduct.

The girl, with unwonted pertinacity and very much to Mrs. Henderson's surprise, makes one further effort to clear up this point.

"I knew something of a Mr. Philip Fletcher once," she says; "the name struck me curiously just now; the one I mean had no regular profession, and very few friends, he told us."

"That must have been his cousin—unluckily my Phil has a cousin who bears the same name; your description carries out what I have heard of him; he has no profession, and he does not deserve to have many friends; he is a clever, worthless—."

"Don't abuse him," Olive exclaims, angrily; "he is all you say, and worse perhaps, but don't abuse him."

And then Mrs. Henderson guesses how it has been with the girl who has been so conspicuously reserved about her past life. Guesses how it has been, and pities her for such being, but at the same time feels a little annoyed at Olive's having confused the identity of the two cousins even in ignorance.

The dancing goes on merrily enough with the majority, but Madge Roden is uneignedly,
openly, heartily sorry, for the absence of the handsome stranger who is such a brilliant and attractive man of the world in comparison with any one who has hitherto been seen among these Exmoor hills. And old associations roused by the name overpower Olive to the extent of making her strike several wrong notes. His cousin must know something of the welfare and the whereabouts of that once well-loved black sheep. She will hear of him again. And "Oh!" she prays, "may it be something good at last."

As she drives home this night in the Wilmot's square cart, she thinks of one drive she had on just such another night, five years ago, with Philip Fletcher opposite to her, and her hand clasped by his. Some of the words he whispered then ring mockingly in her ears now, and she recalls with frightful fidelity the exultant throbb of bliss that her heart gave when he pleaded to "see her the next day to ask her to be—" the closer pressure of the hand said more to her than any spoken words could have said.

Of course she did not give him the permission, and of course he came, and saw, and wooed, and won her.

She was living with her uncle and aunt then, and they were rich people who surrounded their beautiful orphan niece with all imaginable luxury, and expected to be repaid for it, by her making a good marriage. Then ensued a brief season of proud love and happiness, and faith in Philip Fletcher—a period of praying to her uncle and aunt to believe in him, to take his version of his life as gospel truth, to give her to him, and treat her as their own child still. And when her prayers were granted, and they were about to realize their wishes, then ensued a period of such anguish and humiliation as she shudders even now to think of. Then proved false and a fool at the same time; he broke off his engagement to Olive Aveland, gambled for higher stakes, proposed to a richer girl, and was refused, for Olive's story was known.

She had been an ardent, impulsive girl in those days, and had shown her love for her handsome, adoring young lover very openly. So when she had the letter, in which he told her that he had "made a vow to crush the love which could never make them happy, out of her heart—it had never existed in his own," she thought it a hoax—a vile, vulgar jest. But when he never came, when other tongues told the truth to her relations, she could not keep her miserable young heart up with that hope any longer. Whatever the cause, the result was clear. He had jilted her—made her life a barren waste—been far more cruel than she had deemed it possible any one could ever be to her.

Pride, dignity, self-respect all fled, and in the madness of her misery she wrote to him. "You either loved me, or you lied to me," she said; "if you don't want me to curse the day I listened and believed, write to me once, and say at least you loved me then. You have made the world a hell to me—but I love you still."

He was a prudent young man. The richer girl had not refused him then, and he had no desire for any stray documents to fall into her hands. There was no knowing what a rash, ardent creature like Olive might do. So he burned the letter and never answered it.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST AWAKENING.

It is the last day of the "Halsworthy Week," and Madge Roden is permitting herself to feel rather glad that "it is nearly over," this fête which she has organized, and which, from every body's point of view, has been such a grand success. Madge has enjoyed it as much as any one; still she tells her aunt that she "thinks the quiet will be delightful again."

She says this as she stands in her aunt's dressing-room; she has come in to say "Good-morning," previous to walking over to the Vicarage to breakfast, as is her frequent habit.

Old Miss Roden regrets that the quiet will not be so absolute as she could desire. "While the Hendersons have Mr. Fletcher staying there, we may be sure there will be something going on."

"But, aunt, he's just like one of our—of themselves," Madge says, hastily.

"Mrs. Henderson is quite infatuated about the young man," Miss Roden the elder remarks, severely. "I quite look upon her as accountable for him in this neighborhood; she has introduced him."

In her heart of hearts, Miss Roden is a little jealous of the more sympathetic married woman's influence over Madge. "I respect Mrs. Henderson for her many good qualities," Aunt Lucy says sometimes; "but she is apt to rely too much on her own judgment." This being her opinion of Mrs. Henderson, she is not altogether sorry when slight difficulties, not to say little evils, may be fairly anticipated from the results of any of Mrs. Henderson's ill-considered acts.

Madge is not inclined to argue this morning; she merely says,

"I don't see that the neighborhood has any business to question her regard for her old friend's son," and then walks away to the Vicarage, thinking a good deal about the guest, and his sprained ankle, and his many delightful qualities. He is the first young man, it must be borne in mind, who has ever come intimately into Madge's life. And, unquestionably he is a very delightful first experience.

The drive through the Vicarage grounds curls and twists about in a sinuous and surprising way. Madge comes suddenly face to face with the man she is thinking about, and to her good-natured pleasure marks in a mo-
ment that he is not lame any longer. "You will be able to come to us this last day, won't you?" she asks very winningly, and the strain evidently pains him, for he limps as he answers.

"I hope so; I am desperately inclined to be rash, if Mrs. Henderson will let me; but at any rate you must tell me whom you expect today. I know all your names now, and I want you to tell me who I am to like and dislike when I meet them."

"This looks like his staying for some time," Madge thinks, with a certain amount of pleasure in the thought, and so rather brightly she proceeds to mention several people, and give him brief incisive word-paintings of them.

"I gather that they are more interesting as described by you, than they will be in real life," he says. "I should have known them all so easily if I had come to your ball the other night; that sprain was a miserable misfortune. The South Journal says, 'all the rank, fashion, beauty, and grace of the neighborhood assembled in Miss Roden's hospitable mansion, where dancing was kept up till a late hour.' Tell me about the beauties!"

"There were not many—only one real beauty," Madge begins, truthfully. Then she generously reminds herself that the first description is the one that always influences the mind, and so she determines to say "true things" about the many girls who will be hoping for this man's notice while he is staying here.

"I ought to have said there are so many sweet, charming girls about here."

"But only one regular beauty; tell me about her. I don't care for sweet, charming girls."

"She is a Miss Aveland."

"An intimate friend of yours? Is there any chance of my seeing her at Moorbridge House?"

"Every chance," Madge answers, with what he considers most uncalled-for animation. "She is a most intimate friend, though she hasn't been here very long."

They are standing under the veranda outside the dining-room window now, and Mrs. Henderson from inside hears Madge's last words, guesses to whom they relate, and comes up to join in the conversation.

"You're speaking of Olive, I suppose, Madge. By-the-way, Philip, she knew your cousin, she told me last night." Mrs. Henderson puts her kind hand on her favorite's shoulder as she says this, and her favorite smiles faintly.

"I am constantly meeting with people who have that pleasure, to my sorrow, for they have a habit of mixing up the two Philip Fletchers in other people's minds," he says.

Madge scans his face curiously, keenly, then considerably averts her gaze as she suggests.

"I am sure the sun is too hot for you, Mr. Fletcher; let us go in."

"And as they go in, Mrs. Henderson words of belief of hers that the other Philip Fletcher has been rather too much to Miss Aveland, for her ever to make the mistake of "mixing him up" with the present Phil."

"Lucky fellow, if, as you say, she is such a beauty," he remarks. Then Mrs. Henderson tells him that his opportunities of judging of her beauty will be many: "for I'm as fond of her as Madge is, and I often get her here," she adds.

"I am afraid she won't show to-day; the Wilmots would feel themselves defrauded of a portion of their pound of flesh if she wanted to come out two days following."

"Are they the friends she is staying with?"

"She is governness in their family," Mrs. Henderson explains, and again Madge observes that his face gets red and gets pale without any visible sufficient cause.

By the time the Queen of the Revels is due on the lawn, which is her throne, Mr. Philip Fletcher's ankle is strong enough to enable him to walk home with her. Mrs. Henderson is a good, prudent woman, but she is no dragon of propriety, or prudery rather. She permits the young people to walk away alone. And by the time the sun sets this day Philip Fletcher has made up his mind that the stakes he came down to look at are worth playing for at any risk. Unluckily for him, he has to play against Time! As soon as he realizes this, he resolves to get over the first meeting with Madge's beautiful favorite friend, Miss Aveland, as soon as possible.

"It's the first holiday he has had for years, poor boy, and he does enjoy it so much," Mrs. Henderson says pathetically to Madge. And Madge's kind heart is at once stirred within her to make this holiday as pleasant an episode in his life of hard work and self-sacrifice as possible. With the close of the festive week, Halsworthy subsides into its normal condition of quiet, and by the dawning of the Monday of the next week, Philip has a very clear idea of what the ordinary Halsworthy life is.

"Her lines are cast in as secluded a spot as the Lady of Shalot's," he tells himself; "poor girl, with all that underlying vivacity she must be 'half sick of shadows.'"

He sketches boldly, cleverly, rapidly, and Madge knows all the best bits within a radius of ten miles. Her services are in constant requisition as this gifted amateur's guide. The guide is a very willing one, for the gifted amateur talks as cleverly as he sketches. They pass many long hours of these sunny summer days on the purple slopes of heath-covered hills of Exmoor, and Madge acknowledges to herself that she is getting more and more fascinated by this young fellow, who is as manly and clever as he is filial and good. Nevertheless, he is not the Philip she had pictured he would be, and sometimes a sense of disappointment seizes her. In short, long before Madge quite suffers her heart to stray into his keeping, it is broadly rumored in Halsworthy that they are engaged.

Undoubtedly Philip Fletcher has a power
of staying as well as a turn of speed. In spite of its being so all-important to him, as he considers, to bring matters to a climax with this girl whom he means to make his wife, he does not mar or hinder himself by one hasty false step. To lookers-on he seems to be quietly walking over the course. But he is going with a caution that only he himself wots of.

He was rather tired of free expanses and bold sweeps of moor-land, he says to her one day. He wants some close bit of perfect water and foliage. Of course Madge is equal to the occasion, and can supply his wants at the pleasant cost of a scramble for a couple of miles along the bank of a river that is always in fierce action against the boulders in its midst.

"It's a series of water-falls all the way up," she explains, "but quite at the top where I mean, there is the sweetest, finest, grandest bit in the world."

"Sweet, fine, and grand! that will do," he says, as he takes up his shawl and his sketching materials, and indicates that he is ready to start.

"It's all there, I assure you, Mr. Fletcher; the river bounds down the hill-side at that point over a dozen intersecting rocks; the suddenness and the velocity are grand. Then the banks are wreathed with flowers, and ivy and ferns all down to the water's edge, that's sweet. And the way the trees arch themselves and meet overhead gives one good ideas for a cathedral aisle, and that is fine, I am justified in my combination of epithets."

They are well into the scrambling path by the river-side now, and here and there steep places have to be clambered, for the path (such as it is) is up rather a sharp incline. Nature seems to be making herself as fascinatingly beautiful as she possibly can, for the benefit of these two young people.

The advantage there is in a man being, tall and strong is very patent to her as Philip swings her easily round some intervening boulders. In the heat of her perfect appreciation of this fact, she adventures upon a topic she had never touched upon before, and asks:

"Are your sisters at all like you?"

"I have no sisters," he answers gayly, for Madge is looking particularly pretty, and he feels that his is going to be a very fair fate after all.

In her astonishment at this his utter renunciation of his nearest kin, Madge suffers her feet to slip from under her, and becomes immersed in about two feet of water. By the time she is pulled out, and her dress has been deftly wrung, Philip is ready with an explanation of that apparently incomprehensible speech.

"How could I remember the existence of my sisters or of any other human being, when my mind was so full of—" He pauses, for his tact teaches him that to finish his sentence as he had intended doing when he commenced it, will be to ruin his cause altogether. Madge thoroughly appreciates that pause. It saves her the responsibility of being definite, and she feels rather more indefinite at this moment than she has ever felt in her life before. Philip Fletcher is handsome, well-bred, and cleverly amusing. But so she had pre-determined he would be, before she ever saw him. And she had also pre-determined that he would be something more—which he is not.

So Madge collects her faculties, and recollects the original topic which led to that vague remark of his.

"Now that your mind is no longer full of something it oughtn't to have been full of at all," she says, a little slyly, "I suppose you can answer my question, are your sisters at all like you?"

"No-o," he answers, a little hesitatingly. Chrissy and Mabel Fletcher are not at all the type of women Philip admires. But his hesitation in this matter of considering their claims to a resemblance of him is not due to vanity, but to vexation of spirit, of which Madge has no conception. No human being is altogether bad, and at this juncture the Philip Fletcher who is winning Madge Roden to the best of his ability, feels heartily ashamed of himself—and horribly afraid of either going on, or "going back." So it is that he hesitates and blanches a little as he answers,

"No—they're not like me—happily for them."

There is a ring of something genuine about this speech—about the tone of it—about the look which accompanies it! And Madge is so sympathetic to any thing that is genuine. She puzzles herself for a brief moment, as to whether it is self-contempt or self-compassion, this "something" which thrills her. That moment over—though she is puzzled still—she gives the rein to her sympathy and speaks:

"You mean them to be thought something very splendid indeed, when you say, 'happily for them' they're not like you. 'I'd like to know your sisters.'"

In spite of this abject flattery, Madge is not a fawning flirt. Be it understood at once that her apparent desire to win and chain this man by all the subtle influences in her power, is only the result of her position and her passion for making her fellow-creatures think well of her. As the mistress of Moorbridge House she has been brought forward very prominently in her limited social circle. But he misjudges her a little, and believes that she is quite ready to pick up the handkerchief the instant it is his sovereign will to throw it. Believing this, he begins to undervalue her a little, and to ask himself: "After all, is that love worth having which has been won so easily?" For, clever as he is, Mr. Philip Fletcher has fallen into the manly error of mistaking Madge's admiration for the Idea he represents to her for love of himself.

The sketching-materials have been put up for a long time, and the sun is going down
with golden reluctance, and the thrill of the falling waters sounds more loudly than it does in broad day, before Philip Fletcher and Madge Roden make the homeward move this night. By the time they do this they have advanced greatly in their intimacy—though he knows and she feels that he checked himself on the brink of an offer of marriage to her just now. Notwithstanding that apparently precautionary halt of his, he is doing good work with Madge this day. For he talks to her of the many ambitions of his boyhood, and she remembers how he renounced them all for the benefit of his family.

Sauntering along in that soft summer night air by the side of the intemperate river, it occurs to her that all these long summer hours spent together "are not to be justified" if she halts and wavers now. Madge is as honest as the day, and as honorable as a man, or rather as the perfect type of man, ought to be. She holds it to be as faulty a proceeding for a woman to raise false hopes, and then to screen herself behind innocence and unconsciousness, as it is for a man to do so. She had not meant to give him excellent opportunities of learning to love her, but it came home to her this evening that she had seemed to do it. And the seeming must have misled him to the full as much as if she had meant it. "And I wouldn't deceive a dog knowingly," the girl is thinking, self-condemningly, while the object of her compassion and remorse walks on in unusual silence by her side.

He is quite clever enough to follow the workings of her mind. Hers is a sensitive tell-tale face, that says "sorry or glad" as openly as a child's. He is right in so far as he thinks that Madge's eyes are opened to-night, to the fact that he has passed the narrow boundary-line between friendship and love. But he is wrong in the deduction he draws, namely, that Madge will adopt a stand-off demeanor to him until she has quite made up her mind as to whether it would be well for her to repel or to accept him. Madge never in her life made a plan or chalked out a line of conduct that, if followed out, would be of benefit to herself alone. She is not likely to do it now. Unluckily for herself, she is as generous, as undesigned, and unconscious in this as in other matters. Madge would go on being just as friendly, just as frank, just as demonstrative of her regard for him as she had ever been, whether he proposed to her or not, and whether she refused him or not. That is, she will be these things if he will let her. But the chill fear that this well-liked new acquaintance, who seems much more like an old friend to her than any one else in the world, has not struck her.

So he thinks she is leading him on after the manner of the majority, when she exclaims—

CHAPTER IV.
GENEROUS FOLLIES.
"Thus doth the dust destroy the diamond."

"Look here! I used to play at coming to this cottage to spend my honey-moon, when I was a child!": and she points as she speaks to a low thatched house that stands a little way back from the river, on a half-moon of turf that is studded with myrtles, just bursting into bloom, and with standard roses.

"With whom used you to play that interesting game?" he asks, with the slightest accent of sarcasm in his voice. He is not in the least in love with this girl, who is childish enough to be surprised at a man feeling (or feigning) love for her. But he is jealous, for all that, at her ever having played at love and matrimony before his advent.

"Why, with my doll, to be sure," she answers, feeling half ashamed at having been led into speaking of her baby pursuits. "I'd no brothers nor sisters, you know," she adds, apologetically; "and one must play with something. Old servants of ours live here, and let lodgings; so we can sit down and rest on this bench."

As she speaks, she stoops and walks in under the drooping branches of a tree that partially concealed a knobby, gnarled, uncomfortable combination of roots and branches that is supposed to look essentially rustic; and he follows her, and asks,

"No brothers nor sisters!—any cousins?"

"Oh yes! I have cousins; but they live in London, and we never met as children."

"And no playfellows—no little lovers to bring 'a lily or a cherry, or some new-invented game,' as Haynes Bally sings. Again there is the slight, faint accent of jealous sarcasm in his tone; and this time Madge hears it, and knows what it means, and feels that in some way or other she has been wrong again.

There is a good deal of ease, and force, and freedom about a statement this semi-conviction impels her to make by-and-by. She has been very much accustomed all her life to make full confession of every fault and folly she is self-suspected of; and she is also very much accustomed to receive instant and loving forgiveness. She is craving for this man's pardon now—his pardon for a fault she has not committed; and so presently she says, so truly and timidity (and he merely thinks her an audacious flirt for her pains),

"I have never had a lover in my life, Mr. Fletcher; not even a baby one to bring me 'a lily or a cherry.'"

There is a rickety table in front of the knobby and gnarled seat, and on this Philip Fletcher leans his arms as he turns his head to look at the girl by his side; and her color rises fast and furiously, for his glance is a far bolder one than the Philip of her imaginings would have bestowed upon her.

"Oh! I see," he says, "it's your habit, Miss Roden, to ignore all the love that is offered to
you. Well! it's a course that must save you a great deal of trouble; but how about the offer-
ers?"

"Through her own act her majesty he wounds:" she with her own hand gave him the nettle (it isn't a dagger, or any thing true and tried, like steel) with which he is stinging her now. Why did she say anything about that childish pastime of hers? Why did he lure her into this conversational web by means of Haynes Bally's innocent little song?

"Ah!" she says, quickly, really stung into imprudence now, "you shouldn't say that. If any offerings had been made, do you think I would ever speak of them to you—to any one?"

He is trying to make up his mind as to whether or not it would be well to take the leap now at once, or whether it would be well to wait, and make her feel and fear that her prey may escape her altogether. He misconstrues her utterly and entirely. He believes that she is giving him encouragement, and that it is quite on the cards that she may only be desirous of adding his scalp to her collection. For he has no faith in that statement of hers that she has never had a lover; and as he hesitates and pauses, Madge rises and picks up the light shawl which she has thrown on the table, and in doing so pulls to the ground a pair of scissors that have been lying there unobserved.

"Mrs. Ball must have lodgers," she remarks, as she picks up the gilt-handled scissors; "these can't be hers. I'll go and hear who it is."

And before Philip Fletcher has made up his mind as to whether it would be well to put it to the touch quite so soon or not, Madge has crossed the myrtle-studded lawn, and is knocking at the door of the cottage.

In another instant a pleasant buzz falls on his ears. Madge's rich clear voice is raised in gratified surprise, and some fuller, deeper notes that are not unfamiliar—that are, "Yes, by Jove! that are Olive's," he cries, as against his own sense of expediency he rises, and goes half across the lawn, and there waits to be called for, to be seen, to be—he hardly dares to think what.

Meantime the pleasant buzz has ceased, and there is a sort of low hum of explanation going on inside the pretty cottage, the outside of which is all beauty, and peace, and flowers. There is a goodly share of beauty inside also; but there is no peace in one breast at least, and the flowers are changing to noxious weeds rapidly.

Madge, having crossed the threshold, has been met, stopped, petrified nearly, by the apparition of a tall lissom figure in unbleached holland. (In the midst of her astonishment, Madge notices the admirable manner in which the polonaise departs itself, and resolves to have the pattern of it.) There is nothing at all melodramatic about the utterance of the tall lissom figure; she merely says,

"When did this Mr. Fletcher come, dear?"

"Why, some time ago," Madge answers;

"don't you know? Of course you don't, though; you know nothing of what goes on in Halsworthy, when Halsworthy shakes off dull sloth. But are you, here? and why are you here, and how are you here?"

"I have had neuralgia; and I've come here for a holiday and a change," Olive Aveland says, rather deprecatingly; and Madge protests—

"A change! coming into the bed of a river for neuralgia; why didn't you come to me? You shall come to-night."

"I can not."

She emphasizes her refusal very firmly; but Madge can be equally decided, equally firm. In the bottom of this latter's heart there lurks a happy thought that it will be well to have Olive Aveland with them for the remainder of the homeward walk. "Perhaps he may fall in love with Olive," Madge thinks; "and if he does, I wonder if I should like it."

"Do go on, dear," Olive says, "and leave me quiet; the least thing drives me half mad with pain now: do go on to-night."

"That's because you need change and excitement," Madge says, apsiently. Then she proceeds to introduce strong elements of both these things into Olive's life by going to the door and calling for "Mr. Fletcher.

He comes in at once, without delay, without embarrassment, apparently. There is nothing else for him to do—and (off the boards) he is a capital actor.

He comes in with that first coating of expression on his face, which can take the color from any other person's look. Whatever Olive Aveland may do, however she may look or speak, she will not be able to surprise him into awkwardness, hesitation, or sorrow. He will follow easily; however tortuous the path she may take. She takes a straight one; and still, odd as it may seem, he follows her.

He is one of the easiest-going men on the face of the earth. Literally, he never "troubles" himself about any thing. This venture that he is making now is the most arduous work of his life; and already he begins to repent himself of making it, because of the labor it involves.

After all he begins to question, "What is the worth of it all?" If all goes smoothly, and he marries this fresh young girl and her two thousand a year, will the "second place" he will take satisfy him. He will be accepted with reservations by her friends, he knows, and he will be mentally right in hating them for being morally right, and there is nothing for him to do now but to go on.

He arrives at this conclusion as Olive Aveland comes into the passage, well into the light that is shed through the door-way, and says,

"A friend of yours, Madge, I suppose? I am glad to see him."

"There will be no difficulty with a woman who can say this, to spare another woman's feelings." At least, Philip is sure of this for a
moment. Then he wonders "what she means," as Olive's eyes show him that she is glad, very glad, to see him.

She is splendidly handsome! Of this, at any rate, there is no doubt, as she goes back with a swing into the low roofed, lattice-windowed room, and bids them follow her. Come what will of his present Olive is resolved to play the hostess to-night to Philip Fletcher.

"You benighted wanderers must stay and have supper with me," she says, moving rapidly about, and directing Mrs. Ball to bring in every thing eatable and drinkable that the house contains, or that can be procured at this unhallowed hour. And so presently the feast is spread, and rather well spread too; for Olive's services are valuable to Mrs. Wilmot, and that lady seeks to regain them speedily by a supply of well-stocked baskets.

They have been talking scenery vigorously ever since Philip came in. His sketch has been shown, and Olive has looked at it with eyes that see nothing, but that glister strangely. As she gives it back to him, his hand touches hers, his eyes fasten on and hold hers, and she shivers in a way that betokens that she is feeling either joy or pain.

"Olive dear, you're cold," Madge says, "and it's time I were at home; we don't deserve supper at your hands, do we, Mr. Fletcher?"

She appeals to him in the lightest way. She means absolutely nothing more than this, that as Olive is cold and chilled, it is a pity to keep her up. But there is a deeper meaning, Olive feels, in the way in which Philip Fletcher responds.

"I don't deserve any thing at Miss Aveland's hands. That is the only thing I feel sure of."

"And that feeling is the result of Mrs. Ball being rather slow in her movements, and many other things being out of joint." Olive speaks with a carelessness which she is very far from feeling. But Philip's speech has this effect upon her; she feels very strong, and very merciful!

By-and-by (this water-side cottage is close to Halsworthy), Mrs. Henderson walks down, having "felt certain that she should find them there," she says; and they all sit down, and eat and drink things that are pleasant, and avoid things that are unpleasant, at Olive's little oval table. Would that the same could be said of every gathering for friendly and festive purposes!

At length a remembrance of old Miss Roden arises, and Madge pronounces the decree that they must part, as she must go home, and assuage any anxiety that Aunt Lucy may think proper to feel. And so they all saunter out together into the cool quiet night air, Olive going with them.

As they pass slowly over the turf under the moonlight, Miss Aveland is divided from Philip by Madge and Mrs. Henderson. But he alters this arrangement presently, by crossing over to gather a great shiny, starry branch of jasmines that hang temptingly over the garden hedge. This brings him by Olive's side, and as he calls her attention to the immense size of the jasmines flowers unseen by the others, his hand claps hers.

Claps it in a way that nearly makes her cry out with the pain of this joy that may be as treacherous as all the joys she has ever felt through him have proved themselves.

Whatever he may have been, false, feeble, cowardly, at any rate she has the bliss of feeling that at the present moment he is not indifferent. His hand trembles to the full as much as hers does, and his face is full of earnest desire to make her look at him in a way that shall be intelligible to him. But, though she lets her hand rest in his for a moment, she will not let him wring the whole truth from the eyes that have grown deeper through long weeping for him.

"It's still quite early," Madge says. "It would only be sensible of Olive to come in with us, and tell Aunt Lucy that it's her Arcadian freak that has made us so late as this, even."

And though she faintly negatives the proposition at first, she presently assents; for it is passing sweet to her, this sight of him.

Beautiful Moorbridge House rises before them directly, standing out clearly from its background of foliage-covered hill-side. The lawn has recovered from the effects of the Halsworthy week, and presents its usual emerald green and velvety appearance. Rich odors from flower-beds and open conservatory windows are wafted toward them. All looks and feels smooth, prosperous, safe. It will be "a position that none but a fool would resign, that of being the master of this place," Philip Fletcher thinks as he strolls with face bent down toward Olive Aveland.

Aunt Lucy comes to the open French window of the drawing-room conservatory (a modern addition), and they assuage the anxiety and appease the wrath of the dear old lady, who is never, by any chance, either wrathful or anxious. They are very loath to part, although it seems as if they had nothing left to say to one another, for they sit out on the garden chairs for another hour at least, almost in silence.

Madge is tired, puzzled, uncertain of her own wishes. Mrs. Henderson is puzzled too, but very certain of her own wishes. Olive is in one of those tempests of memory, when one thought after another comes upon one like alternate peals of deafening thunder and dazzling lightning. She can not but remember how passionately this man by her side wood her long ago. She can not but remember how soon after that passionate wooing he told her he had never loved her. Thoughts of the misery and madness, of the shame, and the fury, and the agony of love thrown back in her face, are upon her now. What wonder that she does not speak? What wonder that she mar-
vels whether all this is a dream within a dream, as she recalls that fervent, trembling clasp of his hand gave hers—only one little hour ago by the river-side.

Mrs. Henderson breaks the spell by saying, "Phil, I had a note from your sister Mabel to-day: she is anxious about Chrissy."

"About Chrissy?" he stammers.

"Yes; haven't they told you? She has an attack of that wearing intermittent fever and ague. Mabel, in her anxiety, forgets to mention you; but she speaks of that ne'er-do-well cousin of yours."

There is a long pause after this. Then Philip dares all, knowing that Olive's eyes are on him.

"What of him, Mrs. Henderson?"

"She says, 'my dear mother is miserable about our cousin Philip; we have heard nothing of him for weeks, and in spite of all his faults we are very fond of him.'"

"Poor affectionate Mabel," Philip says; and there is a huskiness in his voice that makes both Mrs. Henderson and Madge feel very tender to him.

"I believe you are fond of the ne'er-do-well yourself," Madge says cordially; and he can't answer her, for Olive's eyes are on him still.

It is settled at last, how or why no one can say, that Mrs. Henderson shall walk home with one of Madge's servants, and Philip Fletcher escorts Miss Aveland back to her lodgings. As soon as they clear off Madge's grounds, Olive stops short and exclaims, "Why are you masquerading here? What object have you in deceiving that good woman and that poor girl who may be miserable enough to love you? Why are you passing yourself off as your cousin?"

Almost simultaneously Mrs. Henderson is saying, "Madge! you have something to tell me? Is it what I hope?"

CHAPTER V.

"THE LITTLE PITTED SPECK ON GARNERED FRUIT."

He does not attempt to answer Olive Aveland in words. He just possesses himself of her hands, and bends his face down on them; and as he does this, a great choking breath, that is more than half sigh, bursts from him full of all manner of feeling. And so in the old days has he often sighed his soul out, by way of stopping any awkward inquiries; and so in the old days, before he discovered his love for her, had he been wont to kiss her hands. And she remembers all these things, and still can only say, "Oh, Philip! oh, Philip, Philip!"

Of course stern standers-up for the dignity of the female sex will say that she ought, if not exactly to hate him (Christian charity forbids that), to crush him by unaffected contempt and indifference. When a man has once trifled with and wounded a woman's heart, that heart is, we all know, in duty (to its owner) bound to be like ice to him henceforth. But, unfortunately, the heart is an organ that will not always perform its high and proper duties, especially if these latter be repugnant to it.

It is idiotic of her to stand there and suffer him to treat her hands affectuonately, when he had treated her heart so badly. But women are apt to be idiotic in these matters—apt to forget the offense in the presence of the offender.

She wrings herself away from him presently, and says angrily, for she feels that he is only fooling her again,

"You can't answer my question—I see you can't. Until to-night I thought that, odd as it seemed to me, they must know you were you; but that speech of Mrs. Henderson's to-night about the ne'er-do-well!—oh, Philip?"

She breaks down panting to subdue her inclination to cry, and he feels that he must speak or have a scene.

"It's not the most honorable position in the world that I'm occupying now," he says bitterly. "No one knows that better than myself; but, after all, my masquerading, as you call it, will do no harm to any one. Some time or other, when I have won her liking thoroughly, I shall tell Mrs. Henderson that I'm not that admirable Crichton, my cousin; and then, if she continues to honor me with her regard, though she knows I'm not the son of her old friend, it will prove to you that I'm not so utterly worthless."

"As if it mattered what I thought," she says hotly, walking on with steps that are unsteady toward the river-side cottage. "And as for doing 'no harm' to any one—what are you doing to Miss Roden? She shall not learn to love you," she continues in a whirlwind of different feelings. "I won't stand by quietly, and see dear Madge walk into a net of your weaving."

He sees that she is jealous, and he is sure of her loving him still as he ever was. This being the case, he has no fear of what she may do.

The brisk night air clears his mind, and cools the warm tumultuous feelings which the sight of this girl has engendered in his heart again. His heart! yes, actually his heart. For, in spite of that crushing letter of years ago, Olive Aveland sways him, thrills him, fires him as no other woman has ever done. In short, in spite of his selfish policy, pursued because he fancies he "can't strike out a decent career," because he believes that he never will be anything but a ne'er-do-well, he loves her, and would at this moment sacrifice any human being (but himself) to kiss her lips and feel that he might do it.

But he checks the impulse to cast himself on the hot loving heart that, outraged as it is,
is still so true to him. He lifts his hat off a brow that is so much wider and braver than it need be, considering the quality of that which is beneath it, and—he is prudent.

"You are as harsh to me as the rest of the world, Olive."

"Oh, Heaven help me to be so!" she cries, sharply.

"You distrust me as every one else does. How can a man do right who is universally distrusted? It will not be through the help of any of my fellow-creatures if I ever do walk a decently straight course, for they have done all they can to make my way devious."

He winds up with a reckless, scornful laugh. "Olive!" he bends down and looks earnestly into her face, "let me have a chance of making friends with these people. It will be like the warning note of 'the leper, if you tell them that I am that outcast cousin of the Fletchers, whom the Hendersons have been taught to consider a social miscreant."

"I shall be only one degree less horribly wrong than yourself."

Then a shock of revolution of feeling overcomes her, and she whispers, "Philip! do, do tell me what brought you here; will you, Philip?"

Her voice is very pathetic, very full of some belief in him that he can't quite understand for a moment or two. Then, at the expiration of that moment or two, some evil spirit clears his vision, and he knows that poor Olive Aveland believes that he has come here to be near her again.

He denudes his conscience, he resolutely closes his heart to the appeal made to it by that girl's trusting faith and clinging love, and resolves to use her belief as a weapon in his own service. And it is not altogether easy, nor is it altogether difficult, for him to do this; for he loves this girl who stands trembling by his side—trembling with a truer, deeper love for him than he will ever inspire in another woman's heart.

"Darling!" he says in a desperate kind of whisper, as if the truth were being wrung from him against his will, "does not your heart tell you why I came here—where you were?"

The last words were in such a sunken, pleading voice, that it carries conviction with it to the heart and mind of that girl, who would—what would she not give to be loved once more by this man, who once made her the by-word that, in spite of our sense of justice, jilted girls are?

She does not actually say, "Did you come to me, Philip?" but she looks with those glorious violet eyes of hers, that are so unpeachably soft and seductive, and once more he lowers his head down close, very close, to her own as he calls her—

"My darling! always my darling!"

She is in a fool's paradise for a few moments more while the echo of that loving whisper still lingers in her ear; then she finds that she is at the water-side cottage gate, and that she must say "good-night" to this man, who is her lover and still not her lover. She feels as if the ground were slipping from under her feet—as if he might vanish, and she never see him more, even as he holds her hand in his and bids her a "good-bye" so full of gentleness and consideration that it seems to have a promise in it.

"Shall I see—when shall I see you again?" she ventures to say. "You know I am here alone, and so you mustn't call here; but in a day or two, if you like, I shall be back at Mrs. Wilmot's, and I can always see my friends there!"

She marks his brow lower in the middle of her sentence, and so there is an anxious ring in her voice toward the end of it.

"For your sake, I don't think it would be well for me to call there yet, darling," he replies softly; "just at present you see—"

And she interrupts him to say,

"Oh, Philip; as you like—when you like, only don't tell me that this is good-bye after all these years."

And then she goes in beaten down and humiliated in a measure, by her knowledge of the utter abnegation of any thing like an attempt at dignity of which she has been guilty.

Her head is in a whirl, and her heart is thumping, but the action of both is checked abruptly by a certain sullen look of disapprobation that sits upon the countenance of her landlady, when the door is opened. Olive understands it in an instant. The strict sense of propriety which animates the matronly British bosom is outraged by these late walks abroad.

"I have been up to Moorbridge House with Miss Roden," she begins, faltering. But the landlady interrupts the sentence with vicious civility,

"I dare say you have, Miss; and I shouldn't have waited up long after my usual time, if it wasn't that I wanted to tell you to-night—thinking that there might be inconvenience in your leaving it in the morning—that the rooms are engaged from to-morrow, Miss; and the party coming in at once."

A great flush of color burns all over Olive's face. She feels that this woman dares to deem her (Olive) guilty of something like imperiosity or carelessness of conduct—dares to try and show her that she has been wrong in some way or other. And she has no home to go to; no place but Mrs. Wilmot's house, and Mrs. Wilmot will question, why she "left her lodgings, when she was really getting stronger so quickly."

All these considerations force themselves upon her mind at once, and she is overwhelmed by that unexpected sight of the old love which has been given her to-night, and she is only a woman, and so she cries.

But only for a moment, though. Olive Aveland is not of the order that attempts to wash away disagreeables in a flood of tears. She dries her eyes with a speed that perplexes her landlady, who has gone to get a bedroom can-
dlestick, and who finds her young lodger quite herself again, on her return to the passage.

"I'll pay you to-night—I shall leave directly after breakfast," Olive says; "I suppose you can get a boy to take my boxes."

"Where to?" the landlady asks, reflectively. And a direct inspiration leads Olive to answer, "To Moorbridge House."

The immediate effect of this direct inspiration is to make the landlady feel that, "Well, if ever, there was a serpent, it is this young person at Mrs. Wilmot's; to dare and go to the shelter of Miss Madge's roof, when she had been walking with Miss Madge's young man!"

However, Miss Aveland's manner is conclusive, and so the mistress of the water-side cottage does not make any open appeal or protest. But she goes to bed thinking, "that if ever there was a serpent, this one was, and Miss Madge did ought to know."

It is the:

"Little pitted speck in garn'd fruit,
That, rotting inward, slowly molders all."

Poor Olive Aveland was not very carefully "garned" in these days by any one. But the "little pitted speck" was upon her already in that landlady's eyes.

This is not the first time that Olive Aveland has been tried, judged; found guilty, and condemned unfairly. Years ago, when Philip Fletcher jilted her (it is as well to use the expression concerning her that was always used, even by her dearest friends, behind her back in those desolate days). Years ago, when Philip Fletcher jilted her, her little world—the circle of friends and acquaintances in which was comprised "every body" to her young mind, had been disturbed by the broken alliance.

"The world is a nettle—disturb it, it stings; Grasp it firmly, it stings not. On one of two things, If you would not be stung, it behoves you to settle— Avoid it, or crush it. She crushed not the nettle, For she could not, nor would she avoid it; she tried, With the weak hand of woman, to thrust it aside, And it stung her! A woman is too slight a thing To trample the world without feeling its sting."

These lines adapted themselves to her poor, common case with bitter force and accuracy. The world would not be tolerant to the reserve she had displayed about those broken vows which had blighted her life. It whispered about her, and surmised about her, and under mined all her bravery and self-reliance and common sense.

So, in an evil hour she had writhed round, and "tried, with the weaker hand of woman, to thrust" aside the nettles of social slight and contumely that the very people who blamed Philip Fletcher so severely showered upon her. She evaded questions that only cut her, and could never cure her pain. She grew silent, "sulky and contumacious, and conscience-stricken," they called it each of these things in turn, when they had wanted her to analyze for their amusement, each phase of this life-agony of hers—each act of this heart-murder that Philip had committed. And so at last she had been so tortured, poor thing, in various minor ways, that might seem very small and insignificant if written down here, that she had mistaken the solicitude of her uncle for severity, and had gone out from the scenes of the life and death of her love into what seemed a wilderness.

And now, after the long, hard battle with incongruous associations, and uncongenial surroundings, and her own insubordinate spirit, she has met that wrecker again, and is ready as ever to be wrecked.

"He will come back to her," she tries to tell herself—tries to feel that she believes; as she next morning recalls every act, and word, and look of love and devotion that he had vouchsafed to her the previous night. They were not many, when counted up even with the care with which a woman who is madly, foolishly, hopelessly in love does count up such things. They were not many. A few of those impasioned looks that practice had made him so perfect in. A few lingering hand-clasps, that might have been (how her face burns, flames, fires at the doubt) as much her fault as his. A few melodious "darlings!" that were—ah! well! sweeter than any sound in the world to her, for all their doubtful value.

She has a very brave, honest, honorable trust in Madge Roden; and in Madge Roden's sincerity and constancy, and general womanliness and worth. Yet for all this perfect trust poor Olive feels very dubious and dillent, as she comes into her friend's presence the next day after that moonlight walk.

Madge is in the middle of the installment for that month of an absorbing serial story, in which "all the people are just as commonplace as she is herself," she feels with a certain sense of gratitude to the author for not having made his puppets too exalted for her to sympathize with them. She has "had it out" with Mrs. Henderson about that absorbing young guest at the Vicarage, who is concentrating all the attention "of every body" (she means of herself and Mrs. Henderson) upon herself at present. And she is trying to feel a weight of responsibility pressing upon her shoulders concerning the forthcoming Harvest Festival, and generally endeavoring to feel that "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

And failing, failing altogether, she knows, for she is too bright, as well as too true, to humbug even herself successfully.

To her enters Olive, at a great disadvantage to-day, by reason of the untoward events of last evening. At a further disadvantage—shall not the whole truth be told concerning these very human beings, by reason of all the starch having come out of her brown holland polonaise. We are all dependent on these trifles. No girl can be at her best when her dress is limp in a way that it was not designed to be.

"Oh, Madge," she begins, rather hurriedly and confusedly; "what will you think when
I tell you I have come to claim your hospitality—will you take me in?"

Madge has bounded to her feet at the first word of Olive's intention; she is ready with her welcome as if she had been preparing it for a week.

"I am glad—I am glad, you dear, to have come to me after all; you shall have the biggest room with the sweetest view, opening into mine. I mean the room opens into mine, not the view, you know—and we'll sit up chattering all night."

Madge has had very few enthusiastic friends in her brief life. To her there is an immense amount of unallowed bliss in the prospect of sitting up chatting (she doesn't know or care about what) half the night.

"The fact is, dear," Miss Aveland pravaries, "love and conscience making a thorough coward of her—" Mrs. Bale had an opportunity of letting her lodgings, so I thought, as you had asked me—"

"Oh! bless Mrs. Bale!" Madge interrupts, glittering all over with the delight of having this selected friend of hers domesticated with her in her own house; "it's better than the whole Halsworthy week put together to have you here."

"It's better than the whole Halsworthy week put together to be here, I know that," Olive says devoutly, as she remembers how intimate Mrs. Henderson (his guardian angel) and Madge are, and speculates upon the increased probabilities of seeing him.

"I am going to lunch with Mrs. Henderson," Madge says presently, "and now you must come too, and we're going to fish up the valley after luncheon; won't it be jolly! you and I together fishing."

"Is she fond of fishing? I thought she didn't care for any thing of that sort," Olive says, hypothetically, in her desire to be assured as to whom the "we" referred to are.

And Madge's answer is given without hesitation.

"No. Mrs. Henderson doesn't care a bit about fishing, but she is going with Mr. Fletcher and me to-day, because I begged for her company so hard she couldn't refuse me."

"You don't like being alone with him, then," Olive cries, in her unwitting jealousy. She would have every woman sigh for him, in fact; while she should sigh for none but her. Poor deluded Olive.

"I think even in Halsworthy one ought to be careful," Madge says, majestically, strengthening herself to utter the saying by the thought that it is a fierce light that beats upon her. "One can't be too careful," she repeats, with an emphasis of which she does not herself know the full meaning — an emphasis Olive, who begins to fear that she may not have been careful enough in the matter of meandering about last night with Philip Fletcher, winces under.

"Well, Madge," she says, with a smile that tries hard to be scornful, and that only succeeds in being very, very sorrowful, "the lion is lying down with the lamb with a vengeance, when you and prudent considerations are aligned."

And Madge, utterly oblivious both of the scorn and the sorrow, says truly enough, as she shakes her dear, glossy head,

"They don't futter either of us very much, I fancy, and why should they, when we never wish to do any thing imprudent. Olive, if you wear buff to-day, I'll wear blue—then we shan't clash."

As if the color of their dresses was the only matter in which those two girls could clash! Those two girls whom Philip Fletcher was moving about the board very much as he wished.

So, again, it was an amber witch who contrasted with bright Madge (Madge has blue this time). An oval-faced amber witch with velvet eyes of the deepest hue, and with a supple, lissom figure, the grace of which would lead the eye off the face of a Venus.

Seeing her come in by gracious, open-hearted Madge's side to luncheon at Mrs. Henderson's, previous to starting on the fishing excursion, Philip calls himself "a blackguard," and calls himself so heartily.

CHAPTER VI.

FISHING!

"Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy, Bright gleams of the past, which she can not destroy."

"As I don't care to vex my soul with a line and a fly (what fools the fishes must be to believe in anything so palpably artificial)," she interpolates contemptuously, pointing to a coachman, and "blue-upright," which Philip had provided with, much care and forethought, "I must take something to read."

Mrs. Henderson is the speaker, and her appeal is made to Madge. Madge being in a hurry to get off, puts her hand down on the first book she sees.

"The Cornhill! Mrs. Henderson is reading it, I know," Philip apologizes. "The Small House at Allington" is the serial story in The Cornhill at this time, and Philip has no fancy this afternoon for listening to Mrs. Henderson's running commentary on Crosbie's many virtues! It is patent to every one who knows any thing at all of Philip Fletcher, that there is nothing hard or obtuse about him. He is a sensitive man. Vain, as nearly all sensitive people are, and rather greedy of the good-will and opinion of those with whom he is associating. Moreover, he has a deep-rooted dislike to seeing pain depicted on any one's face. And he knows well what sort of shadow would fall over Olive's lustrous velvet eyes if any allusion were made to the troubles of Lily Dale.

They walk away through the village, past
the river-side fishing cottage, on their way up the valley to fish. And Halsworthy in general, and Mrs. Bale in particular, are well pleased to see the order of their march. Madge and Philip are sauntering about ten yards behind Mrs. Henderson and Olive Aveland.

Philip is one of the men who are under all circumstances invariably well dressed. On what principle tailors whom he never pays supply him with their best broadcloth and their most artistic make, it is impossible to say. Perhaps they like the light-hearted audacity with which he criticises and complains more freely than the majority of their paying customers put together. Perhaps they recognize in his easy manner of entering their shops, when he owes them more money than they ever even hope he may pay, something of the relentlessly brave highwayman spirit, which made well-bred travelers relinquish their purses with something like pleasure to Dick Turpin and Tom Faggus. At any rate, whatever the cause, his habit is far more costly than his purse can buy.

His light gray clothes to-day are judiciously brightened by a button-hole bouquet composed of harmoniously-blended pale pink and blue flowers. These attract foolish insects naturally; and one specially fine specimen of the humming-bird moth plunges headlong into the midst of the bouquet, and there whizzes and buzzes with a loudly expressed delight that attracts Madge's attention. Some prescience (women in love are very much like spiders, they see with the back of their heads when the men they love are behind them) makes Olive look round at this very moment, and she sees one of Madge's small hands firmly grasping his gray coat-sleeve to keep him steady, while with the other she makes frantic dabs at the humming-bird moth which is bobbing about his bouquet.

Olive's own feeling about him is that she would willingly walk ten miles to catch a glimpse of him any day. And she aches now as she sees another girl's hand on his arm, although she feels almost (not quite) sure that Madge has no sentiment concerning the happy position that hand is occupying. Olive feels sure that he is looking down into Madge's face with that steady, desperate, ardent look, which she (Olive) has learned to love better than any other look on earth. "Why can't I hate him, or be indifferent to him?" she asks herself hopelessly as she stares at this little scene, and Mrs. Henderson quietly reads her face.

"Is Phil any thing like that cousin of his whom you knew once, dear?" Mrs. Henderson asks, following the direction of Olive's eyes; and Olive recovers herself, and remembers how he had called her "darling" the night before, and how he had implied, or she had thought that he meant to imply, that she was the magnet that had drawn him hither, and feels that she can't betray him to this good motherly woman whose friendship he wants to win.

"Yes, very much like his cousin," she stammers out as the loiterers come up—Madge with the insect captive in her handkerchief—Philip with his bouquet a triune mutilated by Miss Roden's chase through it after the moth.

In spite of her strong feeling that she is unwise to do it, Olive can not help managing so that she walks next to Philip along the rapidly narrowing path. She longs to have him assure her, in the rapid, imperceptible, fervent way he has of offering such assurances, that it was by no design of his that Madge and himself had dropped behind. She longs to hear him call her "Olive." She longs for the path to become dangerous, that he may help her over it. She longs to see him look the "darling" he dare not speak with other ears so near.

Madge's voice, raised high in hilarious merriment of some acquaintance known only to Mrs. Henderson and herself, is wafted back to the pair behind. And when he breaks the silence, it is to say,

"What a pleasant light ring there is in Miss Roden's voice; she's the best specimen of unspoiled heiress I've ever met in my life."

"She's a dear girl, and I'm very fond of her," Olive says stoutly, though at that moment she is any thing but fond of the dear girl for whom Philip is expressing admiration. Her prophetic soul tells her that Philip has no intention today of even surreptitiously resuming the demeanor of last night. Her heart sinks, and she wishes herself a hundred miles away, while he glances unseen at the love-fraught, downcast face, and can hardly resist kissing its melancholy away, whatever the cost of his rashness may be. But she is not her uncle's heiress any longer, and in "justice to her, he can not ask her to share his miserable fortunes." "She's not the type of girl to take to wife in an attic on a crust of bread," he tells himself. And as he is no longer afraid of Olive's impetuosity betraying him (the most impetuous women are always easily kept down by love), he resolves to charitably cool off to her from this hour.

The two girls whip the stream for more than an hour, perseveringly and unskilfully. Then Olive, in utter fatigue (fatigue of heart, not of body), sits herself down by Mrs. Henderson, and as she does so she sees Philip move up nearer to Madge.

She tries not to look at them—she tries to fix her eyes on the distant waving lines of heath-crowned hills, and she fails.

"Child, you're wretched about something?" Mrs. Henderson says, suddenly, and as Olive shakes her head by way of feebly negativizing the assertion, Mrs. Henderson goes on—

"My dear, I know better; very few of us marry our first loves. I am a happy wife and mother now, Olive, but I've sickened, and sorrowed, and suffered as much as a woman can suffer and sorrow at the sight of a man who was not Mr. Henderson. My dear, I've kissed my own hand after that other man has shaken it; do you think that a woman who has gone
through the fire can't see when another is scorched? is he so like his cousin, Olive?"

For a moment Olive thinks that she will explode this deception which her idol is practicing. Then she tells herself that "it would be mean, cruel, unwomanly to do it—he has so few friends, poor fellow. Fate and Fortune have been so brutal to him," she finally believes. So she just puts her poor little trembling hand up over her aching eyes, and answers:

"Yes, he is."

"We are both very fond of this Phil," Mrs. Henderson goes on, "though he's been with us for such a short time; my husband and I feel toward him as if he were a younger brother; this morning Mr. Henderson received an answer to an application he has made for a good appointment, that will be much more remunerative than the one he holds now—"

"Has he taken it?" Olive gasps. This is deceiving the blind and winning Esan's birthright by fraud with a vengeance, she thinks.

"He hasn't been told of it yet," Mrs. Henderson says. "Madge and you must dine with us to-night, and hear us give him the good news."

"What is it?" Olive asks.

"The managership of my husband's brother's house. My brother-in-law is tired of active work, and is going to give it up; he says if young Fletcher pleases him it will lead to a partnership."

He is to be given his chance at last. Poor fellow! he has been kept out of it so long that Olive can do no other than hold her peace, and hope that there is not much iniquity in this tacit deception of which she is guilty. Poor Olive! she is fool enough to hope something else too. And that is, when his success is certified he will return to his allegiance to herself.

That he will do it she is sure—if Madge does not win him in the mean time.

Really, Madge looks very much like winning him now. She is tired of whipping the stream and never landing a trout, and so she has pulled in her line and is standing close up by him, talking to him eagerly about the color of the winding, purplish hills, and the rich, brown sherry hue of the water, and the rarified blue-pink there is in the atmosphere. She has not the faintest notion that her friend Olive Avenland, sitting behind her, and watching all her gestures, and her rapidly-changing expression, is accusing her of being a profound and consummate flirt.

"By-and-by, as their dilatory steps take them a little farther up stream, they come upon another angler, who is fishing lazily the while he is comfortably seated smoking on the trunk of a tree, that has fallen half across the rapid, rushing river. At first sight of him Philip sees that he is a fine, good-looking, fair, rather uncultivated young man. That is all. In another minute Philip is informed that this young man, whom he has tried and found wanting so rapidly, is Griffiths Poynter, a young squire of the neighborhood, recently come into his own, and suspected at once by Philip of having designs on Madge the heiress.

There is something very quieting to these fears, which are not the offspring of jealous love, in the way in which Madge presently greets this man.

"What a nuisance that you should have chosen to-day of all others to come and fish this bit of the river, Grif," she says, in tones of unmistakable annoyance. "I did want Mr. Fletcher to take home a good basket to-day, and here you have spoiled my best bit."

Philip Fletcher forgives Madge for calling this "new fellow" thus familiarly by his Christian name, out of his great gratitude for her not being a bit glad to see Mr. Poynter. He is not a bit in love with pleasant Madge, as has been stated before. And he is very much in love with dark, winsome Olive: but for all this he would not like Madge's inclinations, or fancy, or whatever one may call it, to go straying off in the direction of "any other fellow—whether that fellow were an old friend or not.

For the first half hour after this meeting, it does seem very much as if Mr. Poynter meant to commit the gross error of attempting to monopolize Madge. The fact is, rich young squire and landed proprietor as he is, he is intensely shy, and doubtful as to his own merits. He knows full well that he has not the easy go of graceful satisfaction with himself, which is a pre-eminently distinguishing mark of the impetuous Philip. And so Griffiths Poynter frequently suffers himself to drift to some point socially, where he is at a disadvantage and neglected.

The smooth, supple, perfectly self-possessed young man of society without a son—takes the lead in the most natural way possible, before the young lord of some of the neighboring soil, who has been made an idol of in his own family, and never roughly handled by fortune all his life. Philip (unconsciously, it must be confessed) adopts an air of patronizing tolerance to the interloper—who owns the property and right of fishing here, and from whom Madge has never deemed it worth while to ask for a ticket for her friend Philip. And so, presently seeing that Mr. Poynter is being cast into outer darkness through sheer carelessness, generous Olive tears her attention from Philip, and bestows it and a few words on Griffiths Poynter.

It is in the nature of this young man to reciprocate speedily and warmly. If a dog wags his tail at Griffiths, that dog is sure of a kindly pat or a bone. If a cat purrs at him in the fawning, false way in which the sweet, deceitful creatures do purr when it pleases them, he strokes it, and very frequently gets scratched. And if a woman shows him any favor, he accepts it as a courtier might a kiss from a queen.

Now it must be told that in spite of that dece-
laration of Miss Madge's made the other day to Philip, that she "has never had a lover," Griffiths Poynter has "cared for her," to use his own temperate uneffusive language, ever since she was a big, florid, handsome, strong, courageous, awkward boy. He went on craving for her during his youthhood, or hobbledehoyhood. And now in his young manhood the fondness has deepened, strengthened, intensified itself into love—into love that he has not told yet, save with his honest bright-blue eyes (the very homes of candor and simplicity), which invariably open wide and let out all their secrets whenever they rest on Madge.

But Madge has not tried, not cared to, not thought of reading their secrets yet. Heart-whole, Madge looks upon him as a trusty, tried, amiable, human mastiff, whom it is good to have within call. While as for him, up to the hour of their meeting by the river, on this he would have cut his heart up for her, or given up hunting, or committed any other appalling sacrifice that can be mentioned.

Mrs. Henderson, from the heights of her own experience, sits and watches this quartette, and sees clearly that they will not, that they can not sing in harmony much longer. She knows well (few know better, indeed) how one can "love and unlove, and forget; fashion and shatter the spell," but still she does pity, and fear for those four young people. For she thinks of Olive Aveland, "She is getting to love him for his cousin's sake, and if she shows her love to him, oh! my poor Madge."

As they walk home late in the afternoon, a blessed boulder does compel Philip to place himself close to Olive for a minute, and he whispers,

"What could induce you to lay yourself out to please that yokel, that yeoman, that—"

"Why don't you call him only a clod at once," she says, impatiently; "how can you be so ill-natured and unjust?"

And then all her agony of the last few hours is wafted away in a moment, as he mutters, in a sulky, hopeless way,

"Because I love you, and can't help myself!"

And as he says it he has to take Olive's hand in his, because the river-side path has become a mere big boulder jutting over the stream at this junction, and with that hand lying lightly, unresistingly in his, why he would be more or less than Philip were he to resist the impulse to press it.

She skims along over enchanted space for a brief time, and then Madge and Griffiths Poynter drop back, for the path has widened, and Griffiths can't help wishing to talk a little more to that "fair, unaffected, good-natured girl in buff," who saved him from the utter confusion of feeling himself superfluous just now; and Olive, without a thought of the evil she is doing, out of an excess of happiness that has been generated in her heart by that last boul-
der episode, talks to him freely, easily, almost gayly, and leaves him to think her kind, and good, and beautiful, and almost equal to Madge.

And Mrs. Henderson has a dim perception that something is growing which she never planted or desired to plant; and is not quite sure as to what it is, and feels that on the whole she will not be altogether sorry when this excellent, dear, handsome, fascinating Philip has gone off to work the vein of good fortune which her husband has struck for him.

At the Vicarage gate, Madge, who treats Mrs. Henderson with the free, affectionate insolence of a daughter, darts back to whisper, "Do ask Griffiths to dinner; I think he is taken with Olive." And so Griffiths is asked to dinner too; and goes in radiant and ruddy, "his eyes and face almost matching his sky-blue tie and red rubies," Olive notices. And his light yellow hair has a sheen upon it that oil, and oil only, gives. And altogether no one could think of pronouncing this stalwart young rustic Apollo good form.

But through that merry dinner and long friendly evening, Olive Aveland is very kind to him, and attentive to him. She does not do these things with design; but the fact is, she has herself winced and smarted under neglect a good many times during the last few years. And knowing how it hurts, she can not put a fellow-creature to the pain witlessly. So in the midst of her tumultuous, almost mad joy (she has drugged her scruples to rest) at the good fortune which Mr. Henderson has announced to Philip, she has time to give kindly words and looks to Griffiths Poynter.

Is she not a woman?

They sit listening to the low, sweet music that Olive is making for them without other light in the room than the faint light of stars. And in the semi-darkness and under cover of the nocturns she is playing, Philip approaches Olive. It is his way to do every thing easily and gracefully, and without attracting surprised attention. There are no rough edges about any part of his manner. So now the others do not notice it when he lounges on a low ottoman by the end of the piano, and whispers,

"I must see you alone to-morrow?"

In the tremulous notes that follow, he reads acquiescence to his request. And he rewards her characteristically.

"Darling!" he whispers, and then rises up and makes way for Mr. Poynter, as the lamp is brought in.

And now Madge must sing," Mrs. Henderson says, for she feels somehow as if Madge were being overshadowed by this display of musical proficiency on Miss Aveland's part, and Madge, who has a voice that is rich and soft as buttermilk, sings "Kathleen Mavourneen" with such sympathy and expression, that the tears well up into Mr. Poynter's eyes, and he has to give a series of little short coughs in order to prevent them running down over his cheeks, as he thinks
what a sad day it will be for him if he ever has
to say farewell, "it may be for years, or forever,"
to Madge Roden.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. WILMOT'S VIEWS.

"Sweet is true love, tho' given in vain, in vain."

As they are parting this night Philip Fletcher
slips a card into Olive's hand, and when she
gets to her room and dares to look at it, she
sees inscribed thereon—

"I will be at the end of the lawn nearest to
the wilderness to-morrow at twelve."

And she presses that card to her bosom, and
kisses it, and performs a variety of absurd an-
tics about it, such as first putting it in a casket
—presently withdrawing it from there, because
the casket has no lock—putting it in her purse
and taking it out again, because she fancies the
filthy lucre may defile it—and finally tearing it
up into minute pieces, because she fears it may
fall into the hands of some prying servant.

As she finishes tearing it up Madge comes
in, and Olive experiences one of those quakings
of guilt which one does experience when any
thing like a secret—however unimportant it
may be—has to be maintained.

There is rather a perplexed look on Miss
Roden's face as she puts her candle down, and
there is an unwonted degree of hesitation in her
manner as she says,

"Olive dear, I have had such a funny note
from Mrs. Wilmot."

"Oh, have you," Olive says, carelessly, for
her head and heart are both so full of Philip
that she can not give any consideration to any
thing or any body with whom he has no con-
cern just at present.

"So odd of her to write to me," Madge goes
on rather testily, and then she hands Mrs. Wil-
mot's letter to Olive, and politely withdraws
her observation from her friend during the
reading.

The letter is written with a pin apparently—
the lines are all so sharp and hard, and there
is so little ink in them, and the words prick so as
Olive reads them. The letter is a request that
Miss Roden will kindly fix a day and hour for
an interview with Mrs. Wilmot, who wishes to
say a few words to her on the subject of Miss
Aveland's incomprehensible conduct.

"It's the most insolent letter I ever heard of," Madge says rather hotly when Olive has
finished it, "as if you had any need to have
consulted her before you came to my house—
for I suppose that is your offense."

Olive is only a girl, and she does shrink with
a girl's undefined fear and dread from any stone
that may be thrown at her reputation. Her lips
quiver a little as she says,

"I suppose I was injudicious in allowing
Mr. Fletcher to walk home with me the other
night when I was in lodgings."

"Injudicious! and he such a friend of mine,"
Madge protests, "what nonsense, what utter
nonsense!" and Olive says, "Ah! but every one
doesn't know that, you see," and sighs, and
would rather have the sharpest stones thrown
at her reputation than hear that Philip is "such
a friend" of Madge's.

"If she even hints at any thing so imperti-
nent, you won't stay with her a day, will you,
Olive?" Madge says eagerly, and Olive shakes
her head and says she can't tell what she may
do yet. For hope tells a bright tale to her as
she remembers that to-morrow she is going to
see Philip alone.

Conversation flags between the two girls af-
ther this. Madge, without well knowing why,
is mortified a little that her new friend, Philip,
should so unconsciously have compromised her
old friend Olive by that trifling act of attention.
Of course, it is simply ill-nature on Mrs. Wil-
mot's part, but Madge feels that it would sting
her to hear that Philip was dubbed a flirt, how-
ever undeservedly. And while she is resolving
these possibilities in her mind, Olive is employ-
ed in plotting how to make her escape to-mor-
row at twelve.

Just as she is leaving Olive's room, Madge recol-
clects something.

"Oh! what do you think of Griffiths Poynter?"
Olive strives to remember what she does
think of him. She can only recall one portion
of her opinion, which she gives utterance to.

"I think he looks very healthy," she says.

"And very kind," Madge puts in, hurriedly;
"if I had a sister, I should like dear old Grif
for a brother-in-law. I'd rather see any one I
loved married to Grif than to any one else in
the world, I think." And as Olive only says
"Ah!" to this, the conversation comes to a
dead-lock, and the girls say "good-night."

There is a rustic bench planted well into a
space that has been cut away for it, in the
midst of a laurel hedge at the end of the Moor-
bridge lawn. The laurel hedge divides the
lawn from the wilderness; and through this wil-
derness Philip Fletcher makes his way about
twelve o'clock—makes his way to the meeting
with Olive, which he himself has petitioned for.

As he walks along, a passer-by would proba-
tly take him for a spoiled, silly, curled dar-
ing of fortune. It is his way to look in such
a much better case always, than he is in, in re-
ality. For instance, now he is not happy or
satisfied by any means, although Fate, working
through Mr. Henderson, has put the means of
competence, if not of wealth, within his grasp.

Unscrupulous as he is deemed, unscrupulous
as he is in many respects, he does hang back
and hesitate about accepting this good fortune,
which he has won under false pretenses. Who
can tell where the point of honor is with such a
man? He does not hesitate or scruple (much)
about winning Madge's heart and wealth under
false pretenses. But when it comes to a mat-
ter of business—to a dealing between man and
man—he loathes his false colors, and is strongly tempted to haul them down.

But "in the case of a man who has once gone astray, the daws peck so fiercely and freely at the heart he may at any time afterward wear on his sleeve," he thinks. "And so, though he has nearly proclaimed himself to be what he is this morning to Mrs. Henderson, he has altered and fallen back, and only succeeded in puzzling that good woman intensely.

To complicate matters still further, Mrs. Henderson has more than hinted to him this morning that she greatly lacks patience with men who "fear their fate too much." She, in her blind belief in Madge's superiority to every other created being, thinks that Philip is so dazzled by Madge's worthy merits, that he quite forgets his own. And so she more than hints at broad disapprobation of men who are laggards in love. And he with a vision of Olive dancing before his eyes, and with a sharp, stinging recollection of that cousin of his whom he is robbing of the mess of potage so carefully and liberally prepared, feels his tongue tied, and his mind a moral chaos.

He wishes now with all his heart, that he had not proposed this secret meeting to Olive. For the fascination of Olive is upon him overpoweringly as of old, he has no faith in his own fidelity to her. His love would never stray from her, but his vows would, for his fortunes are too precarious altogether for him to dare to neglect the certain good, the security, the power that would accrue to him through Madge Boden.

But in spite of all these low calculations, all these petty juggling doubts and fears, he looks a very exalted being indeed in Olive's eyes, as he comes up to the bench half hidden in the laurels, on which she is trying to sit as if she had not been there for half an hour waiting impatiently for him. Olive is making a shallow pretense of reading, but in the presence of the real, living, breathing, cruelly-absorbing romance that is before her, the shallow pretense falls away, the book slips from her hand, and she rises up to greet him with far too much gladness in her eyes and voice.

For a few moments they sit there side by side, each trying to seem easy and natural, and altogether as if they had met there by accident, and each feeling signal. During those few moments Olive gets horribly vivid, painfully acute, impressions of every thing surrounding her. She is so highly strung that she feels the soft, tremulous motion of the leaves over her head vibrating through every fibre of her body. She feels her heart ticking like an ill-regulated clock; and a stray sunbeam shimmering on the path before her, dazzles her into speculating as to whether that same sun will go down this day upon her happy love.

What she would give—how she longs—to let her head droop on the broad strong shoulder by her side. He has been false as the mirage, and fickle as the public taste to her, and she has every reason to believe that he is these things still, and that he will never be any other. And yet, knowing and feeling this, she yearns for the slightest sign of loving interest from him—she covets every kindly look and word he may ever have given or ever will give to another woman. And a woman who surrenders her heart thus utterly, must always be at a disadvantage.

On the authority of one who was "a poet and a lover too," we are taught that

"Woman's heart is made
For minstrels' hands alone;
By other fingers played
It loses half its tone."

Philip Fletcher has no pretensions to the minstrel's art; but the victor in the Battle of the Bards himself would have failed in getting a fuller and more thrilling tone out of this special woman's heart than he (Philip) is getting. And so at last when he says,

"Well, Olive, we didn't come here to tell each other that it's a fine day, and that the autumn tints are richer than the spring ones," and holds his hand out to her at the same time, she puts hers into it and straightens the figure that had been drooping a moment before, and feels that this is enough—enough to recompense her for any amount of past agony.

"However it goes with me, Olive—however dark and uncertain my future may be, I shall feel it less if I know you're well and happy." And he bends forward as he speaks, and winces more with one of those ardent fervent glances from the dark blue eyes in which she sees her heaven and her hell.

"Well and happy," the girl repeats, tempestuously; "it's so easy to link the two words together. I'm well enough. I haven't a headache or a toothache; I've only—" she pauses on the brink of the declaration that she has only a heartache. The saving remembrance that it is his proud prerogative to woo her with such statement, not hers to woo him, checks her, and she substitutes the words,

"I've only a wretched feeling of uncertainty about me just now; Mrs. Wilmot has 'done with my services' rather abruptly this morning."

"Why?" he asks, eagerly. Then he goes on without giving her time to answer him,

"Never mind, Olive; you don't mind, do you, my child? Yours should have been such a much brighter lot; it's one of the things that a man can't think of—when he can do nothing."

The saving clause informs her rather fully of his present state of mind, and she realizes that some selfish consideration has battled successfully with the love that is passion for herself. She strangles a sob as she answers,

"I'd rather not talk of myself, please; tell me what you are going to do?"

"On my honor, I don't know," he answers, involuntarily; "make a clean breast of it to Mrs. Henderson, I think—tell her that I came down for a lark, and renounce the honors that are offered me."

"HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID." 29
She heaves a sigh. "I verily believe they would be re-offered to you in your own proper person then," she says, thinking the while with quickened pulses of how courageous Madge Roden would respond to the touch of bravery there would be in this man's confessing him and risking a topple. Thinking of how Madge would respond, and of how tempting a response from Madge would be, she adds,

"Miss Roden will persuade Mrs. Henderson to be very merciful."

"Do you think she will trouble her head about me, when I have dubbed myself impos- tor?"

"Yes," Olive cries, in her jealousy, suffering the truth to be wrung from her. "You'll let her believe that it was for her sake you did it, and—and I know what she will feel." Then she nerves herself to learn the worst without further delay, and says,

"Look here, Philip; if you ever had a spark of love for me, don't, when you're every thing to Madge Roden, let her know that you have ever been any thing to me." Then she tries to talk cleverly about it, in weak endeavor to save some portion of woman's traditional dignity.

"We have played at being many things—at being in love—at being indifferent—at being jealous—at being strangers—at being interested in that way in one another still. Now let us leave off play, and in serious, sober earnest be friends, nothing more.

"Has it been play?" He has risen up and now stands before her, one hand thrust into his pocket, the other clasping her shoulder to steady her and force her to front him. "Has it been play? by Heaven, no! it's been such desperate earnest as you'll never care to inspire in—as you never can feel for any man again."

With all his faults he is such a lover as few women can resist loving.

"Has it been play?" she moans out after him. "Oh, Philip, how much better you know than I do, whether it has or not; but I don't wish to talk of myself; I only wish to talk of you. What are you going to do?"

He shrugs his shoulders with a great air of giving up all things, and Olive says, sapiently,

"That will do no good; you're not the man to say 'Can't help it,' or 'Things must take their course,' especially now that you have the ball at your feet."

"What are you going to do?" he asks, suddenly.

"I?—oh, I am going whither fate wafts me," she answers, making a gesture as though she flung her future to the winds. "Mrs. Wilmot having given me a bad name, it will cling to me probably, and, when next you see me, Philip (if you ever do see me again), perhaps I shall be so very much in the shade that you will deem it due to your own respectability to cut me; I shall not be in the least surprised."

He ponders for a few moments, and can't make up his mind as to how he can make his

will agree with expediency. Then he takes another false step as the impulse to take that reproachful-looking, loving girl in his arms and kiss her, overcomes him.

"Be true to me, Olive, though I can't claim you openly yet," he mutters in the fullness of that grasping spirit of his, which can not bear to relinquish any thing that comes in his path. And Olive for one minute struggles against her own infatuation, and her prophetic spirit lashes her into the utterance of an angry truth, as she replies,

"You will never claim me openly, Philip. I know that well enough; why should I bind myself down to be true to you, when you provide against any unpleasantness through being false to me?"

"So you won't trust me again?" he pleads.

"Trust you? No!"

"Then only love me, darling," he says, lowering his voice in a way that proves him an adept in the art of winning, and she acknowledg-edges impatiently,

"I can't help doing that—to my sorrow;" and then adds, as the wonderful yearning to be near him comes over her—the yearning which only a woman in love can understand, "When shall I see you again, Philip?"

"If I only consulted my own wishes, darling, I should say daily and hourly; but I have your welfare to think of, Olive, as well as my own, and so I must tell you that it must depend on circumstances."

"Philip," she cries out, sharply, "I'm trusting you again so foolishly; you won't flirt—you won't seem to love any one but me when you're away from me, will you?"

It is easy to say "No" to this, so he says "No" with an immense air of sincerity. And while he holds her hands, and searches the depths of her eyes with that seeking, devouring glance of his, she believes him.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO HOPE, HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO DREAD."

VIVIDLY, more vividly than the majority, who only mark her calm demeanor, would give her credit for, does Mrs. Henderson remember the days of her youth and the luxury of love excitement that filled them.

She is, as she herself told Olive the other day, a happy wife and mother now; but she has not forgotten the days when other lips and hearts than Mr. Henderson's told tales of love to her. And Philip Fletcher judges wisely in deeming her a fitting recipient of some of his doubts and difficulties.

For she is that rare combination, a patient, clever, impulsive, sympathetic, clear-headed, warm-hearted woman. And "she's but a contradiction still," for being all these excellent things, she is nevertheless weak enough to at-
tempt to work out what she considers a scheme of perfect matrimonial felicity between her two favorites Madge and Philip.

It must be borne in mind, before her conduct is tried and found wanting, that though she has been spoken of as a friend of old Mrs. Fletcher's, that she is considerably Mrs. Fletcher's junior. The gulf of years indeed between the two women, makes her a far more sympathetic and congenial companion to Mrs. Fletcher's suppositions son, the Philip with whom we are dealing.

Her mood is specially good for the reception of a confidence, now as Philip comes leisurely into her presence, after that interview with Olive, of which the chief details have been given. Her mood is specially good for the reception of a confidence, and the instinct of a woman tells her that she is to be the recipient of one as soon as she catches a glimpse of the young man.

- All the daily duties that must be done, have done themselves, as it were, easily this morning. Her cook has been moderately intelligent, and not actually immoderately extravagant in her demands on the butcher during the last week. Her conservatory, to which she attends chiefly herself, has been well supplied with water. Her pet flowers are in their best bloom. Her daughters have just settled down comfortably with a new daily governess, and her dear little friend Madge Roden has been with her for an hour, taking a great deal, and blushing a little about Philip!

- Yes, it has come to this. Madge has reached the stage when, without being actually in love, without feeling that for a certainty, and, in very truth, the hero of her life has come to her, she blushes and feels flattering that in a measure she has a right in him, when she hears the sound of Philip's name. He is miles ahead of the dear, trusted, old friend of her youth, Griffiths Poynter, in her own estimation, for he has that trick of taking a woman's liking without exerting himself which can not be defined.

Mrs. Henderson is remembering the days of her youth very vividly as Philip comes into that little room of hers which she has boarded off from the big corridor, and decorated according to her own taste. She is remembering these days, not remorsefully, not regretfully, but clearly and vividly for Madge's sake. And, as she is remembering them, and determining to be very tolerant to any hesitation on the part of the man Madge is learning (has learnt?) to love, for fear any thing like intolerance should confirm that hesitation, and cause him to ride away though he loves;—while she is determining on this course, he comes in, and the kind, languid, clever eyes that meet his see at once that the crisis is come.

There is a fullness, a steadiness, a quiet power in Mrs. Henderson's manner that makes it a very re-assuring one to any weaker vessel. Philip feels himself to be the weaker vessel now, as he takes a stool that happens to be at her feet, and begins by saying,

"I wish I had come under your influence ten years ago."

She smiles, for the implied flattery is pleasing to her, married woman as she is. Albeit, married woman that she is, she knows it means nothing, and she answers, half deprecatingly,

"Ah, Philip! so many men say that, feeling sure that the influence which might have run counter to their wishes can never be brought to bear upon them now."

In her kind, grand, half elder-sisterly, half-coaxing way, she leans forward and offers him her hand, and adds,

"But I feel as sure of this, Phil, as I feel sure I love your mother, my influence will never be brought to bear upon you badly. I shall only urge you forward in a good path."

For half a second more he hesitates, then all the manliness, all the good that is in him asserts itself, and he rises to his feet, looking very grave and miserable, and says,

"I have swindled you out of this interest—but, for Heaven's sake, don't withdraw it."

And then, clearly and humbly, he tells her all the story of his temptation, his trial, and his inglorious success.

By the time it is told, her eyes are full of tender tears, and her face is quivering with intense compassion. "Poor fellow!" she believes firmly—the whole tone of his narrative has led her to believe—that, though "a lark" brought him here under false colors, love has chained him here.

"She likes him very much, this handsome, glorious young fellow, who likes her so well that he trusts her thoroughly. She likes him very much, and so she argues with herself, that as they have all liked him for himself hitherto, to the full as much as they have liked him because they believed him to be somebody else, so no harm can be done by suffering things to go on as they are for a while, at any rate. Moreover, he is young, and his youth and pleasantness, and his regard for herself, and her recollection of how tenderly his aunt and all his cousins felt for him; all these considerations step in and make her pitiful, to a dangerous degree, toward him.

The impulse to be thoroughly honorable and truthful is upon the good-looking good-for-nothing now. Still sitting low at her feet (he argues rightly that if she had been very much displeased with him she would have made him quit that position of proud humility), he goes on to appeal more fully to her mercy, and to cast himself more entirely upon it.

"I'll be quite honest at last," he says; "the temptation to take that jolly berth has never been an overpoweringly strong one; I've felt, from the moment you told me of it, that I could resign it to the right man—to dear old Phil—without a pang. But the temptation not to risk losing your friendship, and Miss Roden's, has been stronger than any third person can understand, perhaps."

As he says this, he gives her one of those
questioning, eager looks that are so infinitely useful in bringing about his own ends. And out of the depth of her generous belief in his best, she says,

"If I have any influence with Madge, Philip, you will not lose her friendship; she will appreciate your free resignation of a thing that would have been very valuable to you as highly as I do, I hope; for it would be the heaviest loss you could have, if you lost Madge Roden's liking."

Her words are so plain, her meaning is so obvious, that he is compelled to answer her in an outright manner that he never contemplated when he commenced his confession. His passionate love for Olive recedes before his ambitious excitement about Madge.

"It was the description I'd had of Madge Roden that tempted me down here to make a fool of myself," he says, gloomily; "and now that I have made a fool of myself, the conviction that I'm no more worthy of her than the ass was of Titania, is my greatest punishment."

The thought of Madge growing haggard, careworn, pallid, plain, under the influence of disappointed love for this "young fellow, whose worst fault has been a reckless desire to know Madge at any price," fills Mrs. Henderson's mind, and weakens it.

"What if she thinks you worthy, Philip? Your cousin never can be as dear to us now as you are; because you feel bound to resign an appointment that is offered to you under a mistake, you needn't resign every other good that you've gained during your sojourn among us."

"Have I gained her?"

"I can't say that, but I will say that you ought to give her the open assurance that she has gained you; if you don't do it, I shall have my want of wisdom brought home to me cruelly."

Her voice trembles, and she looks altogether rather more "upset" than he had ever imagined cool, clever Mrs. Henderson could look. What a fate! What a girl this is that is almost offered to him! And after all, he has not pledged himself to Olive! Only—he loves her.

But when "love" is suffered to be the lord of all, Real Life very often ends in a desperate heart-rending struggle with every-day necessities. And Olive may do so much better with her beauty, and her brains! And how heartily he'll hate the fellow who gets her eventually, if he loses her— for there is still an "if" between Olive and the renunciation of her.

By-and-by Mr. Henderson comes in with his boots wet, and his spirits a trifle weary. He has had a long round in the parish this afternoon, and he is not exactly in the mood to balance Philip's claims to toleration fairly.

"It seems to me that the young man has sold her, and humbugged us all, my dear," he says to his wife, who is making the best of Philip's case through the open dressing-room door. And she is obliged to acknowledge that he has done both these things, and that still she likes him, and means to stand by him.

"It was simply that he might make friends whom he would never have had the chance of knowing if he hadn't done it," she urges, and though her argument is loose, her face is so eloquent that Mr. Henderson refrains from bantering Philip with book and bell, and consents to sit down and dine with him.

By the time that dinner is over the offender's offenses seem to have become family property, and Mr. Henderson looks upon them with very kind eyes. He will have no further trouble or responsibility about the appointment, for Philip renounces it utterly and entirely, and responsibility and trouble outside the parish are things that Mr. Henderson is beginning to shrink from.

So Philip floats in a calm harbor of refuge, quite safe and comfortable for the time, but very uncertain as to either his safety or comfort directly he ventures out of it. Feeling that it would be very sweet to write to Olive, and sweeter still to get one of those open-souled notes of hers in reply, notes in which she throws down her cards as only a trusting, loving girl who is void of all mean suspicion can.

But sweet as this would be, it would be dangerous sweetness for him to taste at this juncture. And so he sends no written balm of Gilead to the poor girl who is thrillingly conscious of the hopelessness and helplessness of her case.

Her instincts tell her to get away from Moorbridge House, to get away from this neighborhood, as soon as possible. But practical need opposes her instincts. Mrs. Wilmot has "resigned Miss Aveland's services as governness, not deeming Miss Aveland a fit person to be intrusted with the charge of young and impressionable girls." So Mrs. Wilmot takes care to tell every one she meets in a way, with a fullness of suppressed meaning, which induces every one to question "Wherefore?" Then Mrs. Bale's tale of the midnight ramble "with Miss Madge's gentleman" is repeated and repeated again until it loses all resemblance to the original statement, and poor Olive is regarded as a very black sheep.

Poor Olive really does not know where to go, for the fraction of stipend she has to draw from her late employer is too small to be wasted on unnecessary traveling expenses. Accordingly, though her taste revolts at thus staying on near her lover while her lover outwardly ignores her, she is compelled to do so, at Madge's earnest invitation, for a few days, while she searches the columns of all the daily papers for something that may suit her, or rather for something that she may suit.

And Philip, the while, comes and goes and is freely welcomed always by Madge, and seems to be nearer and dearer to Mrs. Henderson than before, although he has not availed himself of the good service that lady has done him through her husband and her husband's broth-
er. A sort of undefined estrangement seems to be springing between Philip and Olive, and he abstains from telling her that he has made a clear breast of it to Mrs. Henderson.

So a few more suns rise and set upon this state of affairs, without there being any outward variation. Only Madge knows, and Olive guesses with sharp pain, that Philip is becoming the one absorbing object of interest in the world to the girl whose heart will never be treated as a worthless toy, as poor Olive's has been.

In very truth, the case and comfort, the peace, and plenty, and power, which are all represented fully by Madge's favor, are proving too strong temptations to him. It would be mere feeble cruelty, he argues, to unite himself with Olive now. She is not the kind of girl to try love in a garret, and living on potato peelings with. Fettered by a penniless wife, he would surely be a penniless man all his life. And when the halo of romance died away (how brief its life would be), she might in justice reproach him with having indulged his selfish passion at the cost of all the comfort of her life! No; it behooves him to guard her against herself—against the countless minor miseries that crop up in the matrimonial path, on nothing a year. His folly was culpable enough, so far as it had already gone, as regarded Olive. But if he suffered it to go on to the end he had weakly led her to anticipate the other day, it would become criminal! That his sufferings would be equal to hers was a fact that, surely, proved him blamelessly unselfish in the course he intended to pursue? It was for her sake as much, nay, more than his own, that he would make an end of this love that was so sweet—and so bitterly hopeless.

Arguing thus with himself, his conduct soon ceases to appear faulty. Indeed, it speedily assumes a rather lofty aspect in his own eyes. Girls rarely consider consequences; it is the part of the men to be prudent, and to protect the imprudent ones from themselves.

So the days go on, Olive becoming almost hourly more anxious-eyed, more pitifully desirous of hearing more loving words from Philip. And Madge almost hourly becoming more and more convinced that in him she has found her hero and her fate.

He has spoken openly and rather carelessly to Mrs. Henderson of his former acquaintance with Olive. Spoken of it in a free and unembarrassed way, that shows Mrs. Henderson that he has never reciprocated the beautiful brunette's evident predilection for him. And when he has told Mrs. Henderson this, and succeeded in giving her this impression, he firmly believes that all his difficulties about Olive are at an end. Firmly believes that when he has counseled her for their common good to go away and forget him, that it will be all plain sailing with Madge, and that he will never hanker after the girl he loves and means to renounce.

Then comes a day soon when he must needs expound his views to Olive. For a situation offers which she feels bound to accept; she is to be a companion to the young wife of a naval officer who is ordered off on foreign service for four years, and so the night before she goes, Philip manages to see her alone once more.

"I couldn't say good-bye to you before the others," he says, as she comes up to him, in silence, at the trysting-spot he had himself appointed. She has vowed that never again will she make one step in advance either by word or look toward this man, whom she loves better than her life. So now she stands before him with her eyes cast down, and in perfect silence.

If she would only look at him, if she would only speak, he would break the spell that is over him, and caress her even while he crushed her. But her motionlessness and her speechlessness combine to check him, to fill him with a sort of undefined awe.

"Have you forgotten that this is good-bye, Olive?" he says, in rather a choked voice; "I have a hundred things to say to you, but while you stand like an unfeeling statue before me, you chill the words off my tongue."

"I know them all; you needn't say them," she answers, in a monotone, without raising her eyes.

"You must hear me," he begins, trying to seize her hand, but she draws it sharply back, and claps it in the other high up over her bosom. As she stands thus bending back a little, with slightly bent head, and tightly clasped hands, there is a wealth of hopeless love, of futile fury, of desperate anguish in her attitude! Her beauty is so glorious, her misery so tempting, that he loves her more than ever in the moment of renouncing her.

"Good-bye," she says hoarsely, after a minute. And then she turns and walks away, leaving him with all his arguments unsaid. Leaving him with his heart and brain burning—leaving him with a sense of such incompleteness upon him as he has never dreamed of experiencing about loving, devoted Olive. At the last she triumphed!

As to her, she goes back to her room with that woefully gnawing pain in her breast which is the proud portion of the majority of women, whether they triumph or are triumphed over in this way. Goes back and packs up her things, and tries to still the ringing in her ears, and to listen to Madge's blithe, hopeful prognostications of the "better days" that must surely be in store for her—and can do nothing but feel in every fibre, in every nerve, that it is over! over! forever!

There are tears in Mrs. Henderson's and Madge's eyes the next morning when Olive bids them farewell. But Olive's eyes are dry and bright—no one knows how hot and aching they are.

"We shall all miss her," Mrs. Henderson says, a little sadly, as they go back into the
house after watching the carriage out of sight round the corner of the drive. But though she says it sadly, she is rather glad than otherwise that the foreign element is removed from their coterie. It is high time that Philip and Madge should come to a clear understanding.

Philip has not come down to the house to see Olive off, but as the carriage drives rapidly through the lodge-gate she sees him leaning on the railings by the side of it. And as he turns one miserable, passionate glance toward her, he sees her head droop forward on her hands, and hears the deep cry that is beaten out of her by this final blow to the hope of her life.

So for a time his path is very clear. But he can’t follow it for a few hours. The whole of that day he spends in some place in the heart of the moor, where only a few stray red deer can gaze with pitying eyes on the form of a man stretched on the purple heath. And not even the red deer can see whether or not the eyes that are so closely covered with his hands are dry or full of tears.

In the evening he is at Moorbridge House; “all the better for his splendidly invigorating outing on the moor,” he tells Madge. And then he whispers to her,

"Will you give me half an hour in the garden?"

She knows well what is coming, and frankly as a child might she answers,

"Yes—I will!"

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CHAPTER IX.

MADGE’S TRUST.

"And indeed her chief fault was this unconscious scorn
Of the world, to whose asages woman is born."

Very gravely, almost solemnly, the young man who has always been so carelessly happy, so uncommonly debonair, and contented with things in the order they are going, offers his arm to Madge, and leads her away out of earshot of the open where Aunt Lucy and Mrs. Henderson are sitting.

As the fair, gracious-looking young pair grow faint shadows in the dim light on the lawn, Aunt Lucy says, with a little sigh,

"My vacation will soon be gone."

"You wouldn’t have wished her to remain as she is all the years of her life?" Mrs. Henderson says quickly; “this must come about sooner or later; and if Philip is the man, why not Philip as well as another?”

The argument is unanswerable; at any rate Miss Roden, senior, does not attempt to answer it, she merely slips on one side of it, and says,

"I am more satisfied than I should have been if you and Mr. Henderson were not responsible for him; as it is, you both love Madge too well to have lightly wished her happiness."

For a few moments Mrs. Henderson suffers sharp pangs of doubt and remorse for her share in the transaction. Then she hastens to exonerate her husband.

"Whatever happens,” she says decisively, “however this may turn out, and I do think that they love each other, and will tell each other so to-night, my husband has done nothing, either to forward or to hinder it; men are not so alert in such matters as we are; he has seen nothing of it."

"But you have seen it grow,” Miss Roden says, “even I have seen it, and you’re a quicker woman than I am; I’ve seen it, and sorrowed over it, and though I’m here to take care of the child, I’ve not dared to move a finger.”

"Young blood will have its course,” Mrs. Henderson sings, a little tremulously; “if we had moved fifty fingers it would have been just the same."

"Think of her coming back to us presently,” Miss Roden goes on, with loving jealousy, “with the flush of that new interest in her face, and that young man, who’s nearly a stranger, more to her than either of us! I can hardly bear to think of it. Why couldn’t he have fallen in love with and married that poor friendless girl Olive; a husband would be a boon to her!”

Meanwhile Philip has led Madge out of earshot, and fought his battle. He will not weary her with tedious recapitulation or long pleading.

"I have two things to tell you,” he begins, speaking rapidly, but steadily and clearly, “I am not the man you believe me to be, and I wish you to be my wife.”

Whatever she may feel when these two announcements are made to her thus simultaneously, Madge Roden does not manifest any surprise; she just lifts the eyes that have a shade of bronze brown in the shade, and of almost golden radiance in the light, up to his face, and he sees that she does not recoil from him. And in spite of his craving for her money, in spite of his liking for the girl, in spite of the general dislike men have for being rejected, he is sorry for it.

There can be no going back now. Renegade as he is to his faith to Olive, renegade he must remain, for there can be no going back, no faltering, no hesitation in his dealings with this young lady. All these thoughts rush through his mind as Madge gravely scans his face, pausing before she gives her answer, yet she only pauses for a few moments. Then her answer comes,

"Before I ask you who you are, I’ll promise to be your wife, Philip.” And somehow this perfect trust in him, displayed so unsparingly, displayed without effort or appeal on his part, touches him to a deeper repentance than he has ever felt in his life before.

Madge is not a girl to deal in half measures. Having waited and been very watchful over her own heart for what she believes to be a long time, and having at last discovered what she
believes to be genuine love for him in it, she is ready to pour out all its treasures freely upon him now; ready to acknowledge him openly before all the world as the real happy Prince for whom she has waited in her enchanted palace.

He finds it easy enough to tell all his story now to the girl who so quietly accepts the situation of being the sharer of his life, his prospects, and his thoughts. He tells how hearing of her fired him with the desire to come down and win her. And as he refrains from telling her why he desired to win her, she finds she cannot be a severe censor about that bit of lax morality, and he winds up by telling her that for the last ten days Mrs. Henderson has known him as he is, and has remained his staunch friend despite that knowledge.

"I thought there was something below the surface when you wouldn't take that appointment," Madge says, and she thinks that there was something very noble in that act of abnegation on the part of a man who was often in dire need of a shilling; for Philip Fletcher is not guilty of the folly of seeking to seem better or richer than he is, before this girl who is taking him upon trust so thoroughly, but who, for all that entire reliance, has the wit to find out every thing she pleases.

"I have just seventy pounds a year of my own, and I have never had the knack of keeping any situation more than a couple of months," he tells her, with an unsey laugh, for the confession implies that he must be content to owe all to her in the future; but Madge spares his pride prettily in her answer,

"What a lucky thing that I have so much, isn't it, Philip? Then (she is a mere girl still, full of romantic generosity and high feeling) she goes on to say, "You will never crush me before it was yours, will you, Philip?"

"Your friends will probably spare me the trouble, Madge; on the face of it the look of the thing is against me, or would be against me," he hastily corrects himself, "if you were not such a fascinating little thing that no man could be with you without losing his head, and forgetting his fortunes."

So he babbles on, as men will to girls to whom they are professing affection, whether they are feeling it very strongly or not. And Madge likes the novel sensation of listening to authorized declarations; and hanging with both her pretty hands on the arm that only she has a right thus to lean, she feels contented, and wouldn't change her Philip, who has won her in disguise "like a knight of old," she thinks, for an army of honest adorers like Griffith Paynter.

As they go back to the room where the lamps are burning now and the moths hovering about the same with suicidal recklessness, and the two ladies waiting for what they each feel sure of, with every degree of satisfaction, Madge behaves unconsciously quite like the young queen of a rich realm about to raise a prince of inferior station to a share in her throne. She has been sovereign lady all her life, it comes quite in the order of things that she should act as a sovereign lady now at this crisis; there is no bashful hanging back, no waiting for the man to make the announcement; it almost seems to both the aunt and the friend, that she leads Philip forward as she says,

"We have come to ask you for your congratulations, for we are engaged to each other!"

Miss Roden feels a thrill of satisfaction in the midst of her aggrieved sensations; it shows that Madge realizes fully that she is the one conferring the greater honor. Old Miss Roden is a kind-hearted, rather liberal-minded woman about most things; but just about this one matter of marrying and giving in marriage, she is inclined to be very hard on, and illiberal to, the men, not one of whom has ever chosen her. Theoretically Madge has always stood out for there being complete equality in matrimony, when two hearts are joined together. But this practical betrayal of the fact that she felt herself to be the most important element in this special arrangement, "is more to be relied upon," her far-seeing relative thinks.

And Mrs. Henderson marks that little act of leadership, and though she knows it is unconscious, she feels more sorry to see it than she has ever been to see any act that Madge has ever committed in her life before; for she knows that if Madge does not resign the reins, they will be wrested from her, and she gains this knowledge from Philip's face as Madge is making her announcement.

However, all is happiness and harmony tonight. The young people talk over their plans and intentions in moon-lighted corners, and servants rush about and serve the elders with a sort of smirking alacrity that proves they know very well the determination their young mistress has arrived at. These latter, by-the-way, begin to hope already that "he" will know his place, and remember that they are beholden to Miss Madge, and not to him!

Altogether this future, for which Philip has played falsely and forsworn Olive, does not look too fairly before him for poetical justice!

The Fletcher family at Chelsea hear of and rejoice in the ne'er-do-well's good luck presently, though they shake loving, disapproving heads over the way in which that good luck has been compassed.

And Philip the genuine, Philip the hard-worked, Philip the cousin of Madge's future husband, having earned a holiday at last, promises to spend it at Halsworthy.

It is market-day at Winstaple, and Winstaple is only five miles from Halsworthy, so the Halsworthy people frequently drive over there on market-days, for the pleasure apparently of meeting each other out of their own parish. Madge has a pair of splendidly smart-stopping cobs which she drives in a little wagonette, and on this special market-day she takes them
along under a bright autumnal sun at a rapid rate into Winstaple. She has adroitly substituted the waggonette for a low pony carriage—in the latter, either Mrs. Henderson or Philip would have seemed to occupy a subordinate position behind. Courtesy wouldn't have permitted Philip to let Mrs. Henderson sit there. And, inclination wouldn't have permitted Madge to let Philip sit there. His place is by her side now, and in the waggonette he can take his place naturally without any derogation from Mrs. Henderson's dignity.

Madge, it must be confessed, goes into Winstaple this afternoon with a very pleasant sense of importance upon her. The man whom all the Winstaple world will know she is going to marry is sitting by her side, and he is as handsome as a star. As she turns her eobs into the yard of the "Red Lion" they all see Griffiths Poynter dismounting from his horse, and they all remember that the last time they saw him Olive was with them, and that he seemed to admire Olive.

The burden of congratulating Madge is the heaviest one that has ever been laid upon Griffiths, but he takes it up gallantly, and comes forward, a very deep flush on his florid face, and a shimmer of hot tears in his blue eyes, and says the commonplace words:

"They tell me I have to congratulate you, Madge. I do it heartily, I'm sure." And he grips the hand he has coveted for so many years, and detests Philip with all his soul for the cool way in which that young interloper stands by and seems to take it all for granted. All involuntarily, and quite without any design of giving Philip offense he turns to the happy young lord lover and says, even while Madge is thanking him,

"And you're to be congratulated a good deal more—for we all know what Madge is!"

Philip bows very stiffly and superciliously, and Madge feels annoyed with him for the first time. Out in the world, of course, they will be equal, or he may be acknowledged the superior without let, hindrance, or questions from her. But just here he needn't grudge her the honor and glory that her own subjects like to accord her.

"Dear Griff," she says, playfully, "you always thought too highly of me," and then, somehow or other, without design on the part of any one of them, she passes out from the inn yard into the High Street by Mr. Poynter's side.

Philip meanwhile prowling behind with Mrs. Henderson, and who from having gone through this sort of thing understands well that Madge is only bringing certain and sure retribution and tribulation upon herself. Philip, with a downcast and moody face, is less pleasant to behold than usual. If this is a specimen of the way in which Madge means to quietly assert her individuality—her well-authenticated claims to being a free agent, and quite independent of the will or willfulness of others, he has made a bitter bad bargain, in spite of the Moorbridge estate and the two thousand a year.

Presently he gives vent to his dissatisfaction to the lady who begins to experience the sensation of having played with edged tools—to say nothing of fire:

"A misfortune it is for a girl to have been brought up in the wilds."

Mrs. Henderson has known other homes than Halsworthy, and has gone through a good deal in them that makes her life at Halsworthy seem faint and shadowless. But she has been the wife of the vicar of Halsworthy for many years now, and she is too loyal a woman to hear this disparaged without a protest.

"Fortunately for us whose lots are cast here in the luxuriant West, we know nothing of the wilds where it's bad for girls to be brought up."

"I am not speaking of the soil, but of the social barbarity of this region," he replies savagely, for Madge knows many people to-day in Winstaple, and is graciously and gladly greeting them in company with Griffith Poynter.

"My idea is that a girl should never venture outside the barrier," he goes on as he stalks past Madge and Griffiths, who are flattening their noses against a photographer's window; "any thing that calls for remark—that makes any section of the world look round, is bad style, according to my idea."

"Really!" (Mrs. Henderson is fairly nettled now with her favorite. How can any one dare to hint at a fault in you, frank, faultless Madge?), "really! I'm afraid you'll find that a very large section of the world will look round in most utter bewilderment when Madge marries you."

"Don't you throw the inequality of our fortunes in my face," he says in a harsh tone; "if she requires a man to be the slave of her caprices, on account of it, she should have taken the bucolic by her side now; he was willing enough."

"So were you, Philip?" She says it questioningly, he notices, for he is a man who by reason of his extreme selfishness is very sensitive to the faintest shadow of a change in tone or expression.

"Can you doubt it? Is she not the load-star that drew me here? Didn't I play a very dubious part indeed, for the sake of her fair face?"

He says all this in a way that makes this staunch friend, this impetuously ardent admirer of his, feel that after all she knows very little about him. Almost in spite of herself, she had arranged in her own mind how Philip would deport himself during these difficult days of courtship. And here he was acting in a way that appeared to be utterly at variance with the nature of the man as she had known him hitherto. She did not know that all this spurious jealousy, all this apparently overweening sense of his own importance, all the caprices conduct which had succeeded his former
cool calm, was the offspring of his love for and
remorse about Olive. And so being ignorant of
this, she failed to read the riddle Philip had
become aghast.

As she is wondering, for the fiftieth time,
whether the laws of Nature and of Chance are
not more to be trusted to work eventual good
in matters matrimonial than the wiles of ma-
tron friends, quick footsteps pattering behind them,
and they are checked by a breathless exclama-
tion from Madge,

"Do come back, Philip; Grif and I are go-
ing to be taken at Hamilton's, and I want you
to be done too."

She would paint splendidly, he can't help
seeing as he looks at her, for her bright bronze
hair is blowing lightly, like a halo of cobwebs,
about her chignon, and her eyes are sparkling,
and smiles are dancing all over her face. But
according to his taste she will photograph badly,
look like a "Prairie Bird," or a "Forest
Flower," or some other picturesquely untidy
specimen of feminine beauty. And probably
as she ran up to him from Griffiths Poynter,
she would run back to Griffiths Poynter from
him. He disliked the whole tone of the epi-
sode, and showed that he disliked it in the way
in which he refused to go to Winstead's chief
photographer, and be put into M. Hamilton's
best position for a lover; and reproduced by
the sun.

And Madge listens to his curt refusal with a
heightened color; and walks back slowly with a
sore feeling in her heart, and a marble wob-
bling about in her throat, to rejoin Griffiths at
Hamilton's.

"Won't he come?" Grif asks, opening his
eyes wide, and expressing wonderment all over
himself, as Madge comes into the shop with a
look of mortification on her face—the first he
has ever seen there.

"Philip says he never has been, and never
will be photographed," she tells him briefly.
And then he feels that he will, as the Ameri-
cans say, have any thing but "a good time"
with this young lady for the remainder of the
period they are doomed to spend in Hamilton's
shop. He guesses the cause: the men who
are left are apt to be keen about any shortcom-
ings on the part of the men who succeed them.
But though he distrusts and detests Philip for
it, he reflects sagaciously that it will be any
thing but a policy of peace to express his dis-
trust and detestation to Madge. So he goes
on fiddling with the photographs on the coun-
ter, and feels it almost a relief when a cum-
brous woman, followed by six children, comes
in and greets Madge with effusion.

The whole party are carefully arranged for
representation in Mr. Hamilton's best style, evi-
dently. The lady is ample, and to-day her am-
plitude is magnified by a stiff silk. Her com-
plexion is a steady, unvarying magenta, and
the whites of her eyes are so yellow that they
suggest aerymony and bile to all who look at
them. These eyes kindle now as they rest on
Madge. There is no doubt whatever that Mrs.
Wilmot is delighted to see Miss Roden; so de-
lighted, that there must be a special cause.

GEOGRAPHY.

"Shall a light word part us now?"

Mr. Wilmot, the husband of the lady who
is regarding Madge with blithely billious eyes,
is the solicitor who manages what is called
down here "the Poynter property;" therefore
it is with Griffiths a matter of habit and inter-
est, quite as much as of courtesy and feeling,
to give her gracious recognition whenever he
sees her, however untoward the sight of her
may be.

She bows out a greeting to him now, as he
makes all his features curvet in a smile that is
about as natural as a spurred horse's prance.
He is too dejected to wish to interchange pen-
dulous badinage with the lawful spouse of his
legal man of business just now, and she looks
as if she had any amount of unsaid words ready
to say to him. On ordinary occasions she com-
mences conversation by saying to him,

"You haven't been near us lately, Mr.
Poynter," but she adopts another mode of saluta-
tion-to-day, and says, as she gives his hand
an emphatic squeeze,

"I'm sure I thought for a minute that you
were Mr. Fletcher."

"You couldn't have thought so for a min-
te," he responds, rather gruffly, "for you only
cought sight of me the instant you spoke." He
feels unaccountably annoyed by the insinuation
contained in Mrs. Wilmot's speech. He has a
vague notion that it will annoy Madge; not
fathoming the truth that Madge will never feel
annoyed about Philip through any thing that a
third person can do or say.

At this, Madge, still looking downcast and
slightly annoyed, is called away to take her
place opposite to the mind-quelling instrument
in front of which we have most of us passed
some intensely unhappy moments. The day
is sultry, Winstead High Street is dull; and
Mrs. Wilmot grows impatient as more than half
an hour elapses, and still Madge does not come
back to them.

"Miss Roden must be very difficult to take
—or very fussy about being taken," Mrs. Wil-
mot says to Griffiths; and Griffiths rejoins—
"She certainly isn't fussy, but I dare say hers
is a difficult face to catch correctly—it's so full
of expression."

"Yes; not a good feature in it, and no re-
pose about it," Mrs. Wilmot says, complacently
surveying her own fleshy well-settled features
in the glass, "a nice-looking girl, though, to my
mind; that girl who was, I grieve to say it, in
charge of my children, was not a patch on Miss
Roden."

He hates her for speaking of the divinity of
he as a mere "nice-looking girl;" but he hates her more for the imputation she casts upon Miss Aveland.

"I can't understand your grief in the matter of Miss Aveland," he says, looking at her sternly; and those blue eyes of his that waver, and water, and flicker, and do a variety of absurd things when Madge is confusing his faculties, can look very stern indeed when mere mortals such as Mrs. Wilmot do wrong to his sense of right—"unless indeed you grieve as every one else did, to see Miss Aveland occupying a subordinate position."

Mrs. Wilmot's pendulous purple under-lip purses itself up at this. Then she opens her mouth with a snap, and says,

"I can only say I hope, though I don't expect it, that Miss Aveland will be more prudent in future," and Griffiths feels savagely that she is referring to that midnight walk with the invincible Philip which has been well bruited abroad.

Madge comes in now, radiant, delighted with the negative which has been shown to her in relief against the coat-sleeve of the artist in a dark closet where the smell of chemicals had made her sick. And Mrs. Wilmot instantly folds her mouth into a more amiable form, and says, ingratiatingly,

"I was going to call on you, Miss Roden, to ask you to forward something which I found belonging to Miss Aveland after she left my employ; I don't know her address, and have no desire to hold any communication with her myself."

Madge's face grows scarlet as she listens to this exposition of ill-feeling which can not be fairly fought. She puts her hand out, and takes what Mrs. Wilmot gives her, and as she does so the scarlet ebbs from her face for one moment, and then comes back in a cruelly burning wave as her eyes light on the photograph of her lover, and the words "from Philip to Olive," written underneath.

It is a cruel blow to the girl who has been so full of trust in him—and in Olive. For a few moments she quails in a way that makes Griffiths regard her wistfully, and causes Mrs. Wilmot to open her eyes in assumed surprise and say,

"I'm afraid the heat of the studio has upset you, Miss Roden."

"No, it hasn't," Madge says quickly. Then she collects herself, and (it comes so easy to Madge to be straightforward in this extremity, for it is the habit of her life) then she adds,

"I was staggered for a moment when I saw it was Mr. Fletcher's photograph; I'd forgotten that he had told me he knew Miss Aveland very well some years since; thank you, Mrs. Wilmot; I will certainly send it to her."

"She must be foolishly fond of the young man if that doesn't open her eyes," Mrs. Wilmot keeps on all the time she is sitting to Mr. Hamilton. "I'm sure, when I was a young woman, I was always up at the least slight, much less any attention to any other young lady; but la! girls in these days put up with any thing to get husbands; in my time we knew what was due to us."

Meanwhile, Madge is trying to determine not only what is due to herself, but what is due to Olive and to Philip. Madge is no perfect monster, and the discovery of this good and intimate understanding which must formerly have existed between her lover and her friend has nettled her more than a little, since neither of them have taken any trouble to inform her of it. But in the midst of this natural nettled feeling, there rises up a strong counter-current of belief in the liberty of the subject—of recognition of the right that each human being has to keep his or her own counsel. If a hundred girls are in possession of photographic attempts to reproduce Philip the Magnificent, what right of complaint has she? So she argues, and all the time she feels as if the photograph, and the words written underneath it, were burning holes in her pocket.

At length she decides that she will say to Philip, handing him the carte-de-visite at the same time—say as cheerfully and easily as she can,

"See here, Mrs. Wilmot found this in one of Olive's drawers after she left; I suppose you gave it to her years ago, didn't you?" say this, and leave it to him to offer any explanation he thought proper, and then forward it to Olive. Just as she comes to this decision, Mrs. Henderson and Philip come in, and clearly the mood of the latter is dark. Madge, with a wisdom that many a wife after years of experience would do well to take example by, resolves now to wait until they are home again; not to spoil the day for Philip, "if by any chance he should feel vexed at this likeness of himself having turned up."

"How long you have been, Madge," Mrs. Henderson begins; she is determined that all the fault-finding shall not come from Philip. The broad injustice of his complaining may not strike Madge so forcibly, if some one else indulges in them too.

"Yes; it's a long, tedious work being photographed, isn't it, Philip?" Madge answers wearily, for since Mrs. Wilmot shot that arrow of hers into the air, everything has been long and tedious with usually vigorous, atmosphere-absorbing Madge. She makes her appeal to Philip in a little entreaty way that is new to her, for she is thinking that he may perchance be annoyed with her by-and-by, for not now at once giving him an opportunity of offering her that explanation which "really does after all" seem due both to herself and to Olive Aveland.

And he falls into the natural manly error of thinking that it is her conscience smiting her. "She feels she has outraged propriety by running all over the place with that yokel," is the way he words it to himself. He thinks it will be a good lesson to "this spoiled country-bred child," to make her feel it still more, by show-
ing how men of the world regard such derelictions of female duty in the case of the special females who owe duty to them. Accordingly he adopts a stiffer, more reserved manner than is quite seemly even in tolerant Madge's eyes. And as they go home that evening she credits for the first time the assertion that she has frequently heard made ramblingly, that an "adoring lover may develop into a stern task-master."

But before they go home they meet Mrs. Wilmot again. At a confectioner's this time, where she is extravagantly regaling herself on the most airy of jam puffs, and economically filling up space in her children with round pink buns. Each young Wilmot is pastured, so to say, about the middle of a broad, brown table-land of bun when Madge and her friend go in, and they crop off the remainder hastily with a view to more, for they know well that so long as Miss Roden "stays talking to me," they may eat on with impunity.

"That dreadful woman is absolutely making her way to us, with an air of being sure of a welcome," Mrs. Henderson whispers, in comic despair, as Mrs. Wilmot surges down the middle of the shop toward the corner wherein Madge and her friends are ensconced. Whereat Madge, who feels very genuine despair at the prospects of another collision with Mrs. Wilmot while that photograph remains unexplained, unmentioned, at the bottom of her pocket, says,

"Do let us be civil to her, please," and looks shy and shattered, in a way that is quite novel.

Mrs. Wilmot is a woman who has never in the whole course of her life done any thing that is either culpably foolish or morally bad. Yet for all that she is an abomination to many people whose tents are pitched in the same region as hers.

"For," as she herself says to an enterprising fellow-laborer in the field of planting, nourishing, and cherishing many weeds that are noxious to her neighbors, "I make a point of speaking my mind, my dear, and of saying what I think; but I must say for myself that a husband of mine has never been embroiled by me." And this does not mean that she has several husbands liable to be embroiled, in stock, but that Mr. Wilmot's predecessor is resting in the grave undisturbed by any back thoughts of an "action for defamation" brought about by the lively tongue of his wife; and that Mr. Wilmot is such a pacific, well-meaning fellow, that society at large for his sake pointedly ignores any blisters caused by the working of Mrs. Wilmot's tongue.

Madge has a piously keen recollection of all these attributes of Mrs. Wilmot, as she says, "Do let us be civil to her," instinctively Madge feels that Mrs. Wilmot is aware of having her (Madge) at an advantage. "If she's awkward enough to mention it to Philip, it will be the one straw too much for this poor camel to-day," she thinks, in half-comic, half-genuine fear, and she hurriedly resolves to fly from her foe.

"Philip," she says, rising up, "I want to go and get some broad envelopes, will you come with me?"

"Ah! I thought from the likeness to the photograph that this must be Mr. Fletcher," Mrs. Wilmot says, interposing her person in the path between the chairs which Madge had been about to take; "I was just going to ask for an introduction, Miss Roden."

In an agony of annoyance and embarrassment, Madge makes Mr. Fletcher known in the conventional manner to Mrs. Wilmot, and then indicates that she is ready to go on.

But Philip, out of sheer captious willfulness, affects not to see this. Madge has put him out this day, and he can't resist the inclination to punish her, even in this petty way. For some reason unknown to him, Madge evidently desires to get away from Mrs. Wilmot. Therefore, she shall be thwarted, and compelled to endure that lady's society for exactly so long a time as seems good to Philip.

"Quite a pleasure to meet so many friends and acquaintances in Winstaple, I'm sure," Mrs. Wilmot goes on, with her largest smile; "the best treat my little people have had for a long time; it's the reward I give them, Mr. Fletcher, for application to their studies; I bring them into Winstaple, and so kill two birds with one stone, as one may say, for I do my shopping, and they see a little life—so good for children to see a little life and society, you know: rubs off the rusticiety which creeps over girls brought up in the country, unless they are remarkably fortunate in their governess, which we all know my children have not been."

Mrs. Wilmot shakes her head in a gloomily, regretful manner, as this flood of words ceases. During the continuance of it the others had sustained that look of feeble, flickering, vague interest which is apt to creep over any countenance when its owner is listening to one of those stories without end, interest, or incident, which an unwise majority are so fond of telling. But Madge has concentrated all her attention upon it, dreading, as each word falls, that the next will contain some allusion to that oppressive photograph.

The young Wilmots, meanwhile, having patiently plodded through the broad, dreary expanse of ruin, are now taking gay little flights over the aromatic regions of lemon-cheese cakes, and citron cakes; steeped in a sweet sense, the while, of these things being forbidden joys, for their indulgence in which painsome penalties will have to be paid by-and-by when their excellent mother gets them safely back into the sanctuary of their own home.

Nevertheless, for all this full knowledge they have of the darkness of their future, they are the only happy people in the shop. For the mistress of it, though she does not dare to check their ravenous raids upon her daintiest bits of epitomized indigestion, is the slave of a dreadful doubt as to whether she will ever be paid in full or not. Mrs. Wilmot has a fine appe-
tite, and a horrible habit of beating down every unhappy vendor of any thing who may approach her. Moreover, the young Wilmots dart with such fay-like rapidity from one dish to another, that it requires a ready reckoner, indeed, to count the cost of all they devour.

"Come, Philip, I must get my envelopes," Madge says when Mrs. Wilmot's first burst of eloquence has come to a close, and Philip pro-vokingly pauses to say,

"I won't say good-afternoon, Mrs. Wilmot, for we shall find you here when we come back, shall we not?"

"What did that woman mean by knowing me 'from my likeness to the photograph?'" he inquires as soon as they are in the street.

"Oh! I can't tell," Madge hastily ejacu-lates, for at that moment another batch of eager acquaintances stop her. A bevy of girls this time, who like the pattern of the jacket and tunic she wears, and so accompany her to the stationer's, and then back to the confectioner's, in order to get these garments well defined in their mind's eye, so that they may go home and "carry them out." And when they get back to the confectioner's, Mrs. Wilmot is still there, and Madge begins to realize how potent are the minor miseries of life in working wretchedness.

She stands in a little fidget now, as Mrs. Henderson settles the bill, and Philip begins to talk again to Mrs. Wilmot. The true secret of his being attracted toward this woman is to be found in the repulsion he feels for her. She has maligned his always dearly-loved Olive, and underlying this specious courtesy of his is a deep-rooted determination to make her smart for that maligning. Additionally, he feels a certain amount of pleasure in showing that "fellow Poynter" that he (Philip) is not the slave of Madge's lightest caprice.

"I have been sending invitations out to-day to a little gathering for croquet and music next week at Rittering," Mrs. Wilmot is saying to Philip, as Madge, who is quite transformed into "Fine ear," stands by expectant of—she hardly knows what. "I hope we shall see you all, Mr. Fletcher; quite a pleasure, I'm sure, to make your acquaintance; photographs very inadequately represent the human face divine as a rule, but I was prepessos by yours the moment I saw it; good-bye, delighted to have met you all; good-bye."

They, the Halsworthy and Moorbridge House party, get out of the shop at last, and now Nemesis rushes up, overtakes and nearly crushes Mrs. Wilmot. Her healthy, hearty, hungry six have nearly cleared the counter, and she has not even the maternal felicity of feeling that what they have eaten may do them good.

A dozen trifles crop up, and make Madge defer bringing the photograph to the fore until the evening. Then she stands by him, leaning her arm on his shoulder very trustingly, as she says,

"Mrs. Wilmot found a photograph in Olive's
drawer after she left; she gave it to me to for-ward to-day; it's of you, Philip."

Has the bolt fallen? Must he renounce the place, the position, the love, security, and for-tune that Madge can give him?

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. TOLLINGTON.

"'Love must cling where it can,' I say."

Mrs. Tollington is in what she herself calls "one of her nervous states" this morn-ing, and the cause of her being so must be briefly described.

Mrs. Tollington has been spoken of as the "young wife of a naval officer" just now; but in justice to the veracity of the parish regis-ter wherein her baptism was entered thirty-five years ago, it must be admitted that "youth" and Mrs. Tollington had seen the last of each other for some time.

But she belongs to the large army of those who dispute this ground of "youth" inch by inch with time. And in this unceasing war-fare she was greatly assisted by her limpid eyes, and a liquid voice, and a general air of being rather too ethereal for this work-a-day world. Her eyes and her veins are so very blue, and her long tendrils of curls are so very bright and fair and silky, and the figure (that of an evening is encased generally in a "baby-body" with the newest apologies for sleeves) is so very slender and willowy, that on the whole no one can be very much disgusted with Mrs. Tol-lington for calling herself a "mere girl still"—a mistaken notion which has been fostered by her marriage with a man who is, and who owns to being, sixty.

Mrs. Tollington is quite sufficiently endowed with this world's perishable wealth to be able to indulge herself in her "nervous moods," her companion (our old friend Olive), and a well-appointed house on breezy Blackheath. She has given the verdict in favor of Blackheath, for three reasons: the first is "its widely ac-knowledged healthiness;" the second is, her "dear sister is settled near—has married into poverty, and may need her (Mrs. Tollington's) heart-and-purse aid sometimes;" and the third is, that there is a deep and charitable joy to her in living thus well surrounded among the shabby remains of a band of people who had been powerful in her genuine girlhood, who had snubbed her when she was living in Greenwich Hospital, where her father was a lieutenant, and who "are so glad to recall their old in-timacy with her," now that she is the petted wife of a man who shortly will have his flag.

The first two reasons Mrs. Tollington gives out openly to every one who cares to listen to them, regardless of the fact of their being ut-terly false. The third reason she cautiously represses, regardless of the fact of its being thoroughly true. But don't think, from this
exposition of her weaknesses, that she is a fool pure and simple, otherwise her conduct will perplex you as much as it did Olive at first.

She came down to breakfast this morning, in one of her "nervous states," with a white muslin and blue-ribboned dressing-gown on, and an expression of fatigued annoyance on her neat, passionless face. And as Olive noticed the expression, she inwardly girded up her soul for endurance of all that the expression portended.

"Look here, Olive," Mrs. Tollington begins, holding out an envelope that has been broken open, "that goose Maria brought this to me, and, without saying that it was addressed to you, I opened it, and out this tumbled" (here she hands Olive a photograph of Philip Fletcher); "and then naturally, seeing such a handsome young man, I read the letter; and when I'd done that, I found it was addressed to you. What does it all mean?"

"It means," Olive says, as steadily as the sudden vision of even this poor semblance of the never-forgotten, still-idolized old love will let her, "it means that a photograph which I left behind has been returned to me."

"Of a young man—and such a handsome young man! Is he your lover?"

With such pain, such humiliation, and such regret that he is not, Olive stammers out, "No!"

"Then why do you look like that?" Mrs. Tollington asks, in an aggrieved tone. "I can't bear to be deceived; and when I thought I had lighted on your secret by accident, I did feel vexed that you should have kept it from Captain Tollington. I am still quite young enough for Captain Tollington to be very anxious about the friendships I form with men during his absence; and of course, if you have a lover, he will come here, and I shall see him."

"And I must live with such a woman as this!" Olive thinks. But aloud she only answers,

"Pray don't be uneasy: the original of this is neither my lover nor my friend; he will never come here;" and her voice sinks almost to a whisper as she announces this fact, which ought to be such a satisfaction to her. Why is love, the noblest of the passions, such a promoter of lies, and double-dealing, and deceit generally? He may make men "fierce, tame, wild, and kind;" but I know that he very often makes women cowardly, cruel, and false to every one on earth but the loved one.

"Then, being neither your lover nor even a friend, you won't mind telling me who he is?"

Mrs. Tollington purses. Mrs. Tollington likes handsome young men, and the prospect of not seeing the original of this pleasing photograph is not agreeable to her, as she had made up her mind to see him. So she asks the question with just a slight flavor of acidity (these sweet fair women always turn acid on the smallest provocation), and gives Olive to understand that it is a portion of her duty as companion to answer all questions asked by her employer.

"He is a Mr. Fletcher; and really I can tell you nothing more about him."

"Why does his photograph arrive in this impressive and mysterious way, then?"

"I can't tell you, as you have not given me time to read the note that came with it yet," Olive says, bouncing up from her seat, with her nose in the air, forgetting for the blessed period of one moment that she is in bondage, which forgetfulness on her part Mrs. Tollington carefully notes down on the tablets of her memory, with the design of showing Captain Tollington "how very foolish it is to rely on a sheep-dog who grows when her own peccadilloes are found out, and her own little game spoiled." For Olive is the child of an old friend of Captain Tollington. She is here against the wishes of Captain Tollington's fair wife; and so all these derelictions from the straight path that companions ought to follow are noted down, and treasured up in a certain store-house, where they will gain greatly in flavor and strength by the time Captain Tollington comes home.

Olive goes out of the room, and can't stay to reach the sanctuary of her own bedroom before she reads the note. It is short, and unsigned; but how well she knows the peculiar turns and twists and flourishes of each capital letter! What a mixture of strength and weakness, of indecision and obstinacy, in the writing that only Philip can have penned!

No date, no address, no signature; only these words:

"Do you wish to have done with me altogether?"

There is savagery in the sentence, and she feels it, and thrills in exquisite agony in response to it. And yet, too, there is something in the savagery that soothes the pain she feels. For she knows he would not give way to it, if he did not love her still. And then she wonders "what has happened at Halsworthy since she left?" kisses the photograph that is all of him that is left to her; and—remembers that it is her duty to go and hear what Mrs. Tollington's plans are for the day.

Shall I tell the secret of all this loving folly of which a girl is guilty, who loves with head and heart, with heat and force, as this poor Olive does? Her very cleverness, instead of being a safeguard, only increases the pain of it all. For though she knows full well that she is being made the fool of hope, whenever she lets herself hope that it will all end as she desires, still she can't help indulging in the imaginings which are destined to destroy her ultimately. Even now, as Olive goes down to her duty, there is an exultant throb at her heart, an exultant light in her eyes, an exultant color like a red flag in her cheek, as she thinks, "He can't forget me." And all these exultations drop down dead an instant after as she remembers, "but he has left me."

Mrs. Tollington has a pony carriage drawn
by two plump, tame, handsome, gray ponies, which she is fond of driving about well under the observation of all such of her old friends as have not these luxuries at command. She delights in making a progress down Crooms Hill, through the High Street and Hospital, well in sight of the still poor friends of her youth, who have many of them grown fat and poor, while she had still remained slim and young, and waxed rich. Oh! the joy of it—the justness and beauty of it! No wonder she forgot to think of the means by which this fitting end has been attained. No wonder that Captain Tollington, broiling for his flag under a Mediterannean sun, is rather less to his wife than the beasts that perish.

She whips her phlegmatic ponies daintily down Crooms Hill, and shrugs her neat shoulders contemptuously as she passes regiment after regiment of the same unmated beings who were girls when she was Miss Smith. And as she passes one very large sisterhood whom she knows to have done their ball-going and general showing-off duty very nobly, the fact of "its all being a game of the sheeerest chance" strikes her forcibly a freshness; and she says, turning suddenly to Olive,

"Why are you not married?"

Olive is in a day-dream—a day-dream of lounging on green turf, under green trees—of love and Philip Fletcher. But she wakes from it gallantly as Mrs. Tollington asks her this, and answers with such lavish recollections of all that might have been if Philip had only been strong and true,

"Why! why, indeed!"

"Really you seem to take it very much to heart," Mrs. Tollington says languidly, leaning farther back in her carriage, and encouraging her plump ponies onward; "but," surveying Olive over her left shoulder, "you are a good-looking girl, and it must be annoying to find that the men of this age don't appreciate your style of good looks. I have always thought them so foolish to think so much more of blue eyes and light hair; and I have told them so over and over again."

"How you must have been troubled by their admiration!" Olive says, indifferently.

"Troubled!—trouble is no word for it, my dear. Poor papa was so particular, that I really shrank from meeting any new man. I don't know how it is some girls are so run after, and others who are much worthier and better, and who would really make better wives, are left to wear the willow."

Through some peculiar twist in human nature, no girl of twenty-two likes to be called "worthier and better" than the women who have grabbed all the leaves and fishes. Olive is quite conscious that she is a goose for feeling it, but she does feel very much annoyed with Mrs. Tollington and her pretensions to fascination, as she replies.

"And what a Triton among minnows Captain Tollington must be, for you to have kept yourself steeped in your enchanted sleep till he appeared!"

The allusion to the sleep that lasts until the real "Happy Prince with joyful eyes," the true "right man," appears, is quite thrown away upon Mrs. Tollington. She does not understand it, and therefore resents it.

"I can tell you I could name six or seven girls who were trying to catch Captain Tollington," she says, a little indignantly, "and I carried him off without trying to do it: not that there is anything contemptibly easy-going about him, as you seem to imply."

"Oh! Mrs. Tollington, no," Olive exclaims, roused into explanation; "I didn't, really I didn't, imply any thing of the sort; I only meant that he must have been greater than the others to have won you from them all."

"He had been posted for some years," Mrs. Tollington says, musingly; "and there is something so flattering to us girls in being trusted entirely by men who might be our fathers, you know. But what I went through mentally before I could decide—"

She pauses here, not because she is in the least shy about stating what her mental doubts were, but because she is not sufficiently imaginative to be able to coin a few on the spot. And Olive, girl as she is, gauges the reason of that pause so thoroughly, and despises the inadequate proportion of it so heartily.

They are in the middle drive of the Hospital grounds by this time, and Mrs. Tollington, by flourishings of her whip, is indicating where So-and-so used to live when she was here "as a child." How is Olive, the recipient of her information, to know that she is making her childhood extend to twenty years? Poor! 'tis but a paltry difficulty, this, and Mrs. Tollington surmounts it with the gallantry of an irresponsible nature.

"How jealous the people were of me here, to be sure," she says, with a meditative air, as she drives slowly along through the well-known grounds—"jealous of a child of fifteen, who didn't know whether she was being admired or not! Wasn't it wicked?"

"But how did you know that the women were jealous, when you didn't know that the men gave them cause to be so?" Olive asks, with an air of abstraction that is rather offensive to one who has been laying herself out to tell the whole thing in a narrative form that will sound well. And just as Mrs. Tollington answers, pettishly, "As if one couldn't always tell about the men!" Olive sees Philip, one of a group of five men, smoking on the balcony at the end window of the "Trafalgar."

She dare not faint, and she dare not find fault: social decorum forbids her doing either, because she is—powerless. There is nothing left for her to do but to sit back in the carriage, and bear the agony of passing him and not speaking to him. For Mrs. Tollington drives well down under this window, in order that she may have all the credit to be gained by the
fact that she can turn her ponies moderately well at the end down by the railings; so Olive even hears his voice.

“What’s that you say, Ritchie? ‘Phil’s last bachelor dinner?’ Let us hear! My dear boy, I’ll give you a better dinner than this any day at Moorbridge House.”

She hears these words. The full meaning of them is borne in upon her mind. She realizes in an instant that the man who has this day written to her, to ask if she “wishes to have done with him altogether,” is up there talking to other men about Moorbridge House and his power there. And his power there means power over Madge—the “power of love.”

She understands it all, she realizes it all, and she can’t help herself. She leans back and turns up her dark, gleaming face to the balcony, where Philip and his friends are sitting, and she cries out, “Oh! take care,” for she sees that Mrs. Tollington, in trying to follow her example, and look up too, has involved her reins, and caught the carriage-wheel in the step of a ponderous brake, and they are smashed over in some way or other, and the ordinarily placid ponies are kicking one another.

There is a great commotion, and very little real assistance rendered. Mrs. Tollington’s youthful groom has been precipitated from the hind seat, and is weeping over his tattered coat and bruised cheek, and the rowing he will get from the house-maid (who has to mend his clothes) by-and-by. He is young—much too young, and small, and tightly clad to be useful in any emergency. Naturally, he is incapable at this moment; and so the young men from the balcony rush down to their assistance, and by the time the much-mangled carriage has been pulled free from the most-astonishing ponies, Philip has recognized Olive, and Olive—has made up her mind what to do.

Be herself! Do herself so much right at last! Show him that she “is no more scorched than he is!” So she resolves. But, ah! how hard the task she has set herself, when she reads the genuine anxiety that is in his eyes, as he recognizes her—flies to her—takes her hand, and mutters,

“Olive! my darling, are you hurt through that fool’s mismanagement of her miserable ponies?”

This is his first impression of Mrs. Tollington.

CHAPTER XII.

PHIL!

“Oh! love is such a mystery, I can not find it out.”

It is five days after the photograph episode, and Madge is trying to make herself believe that she has forgotten it, or, at any rate, that she is not worrying herself about it. When she handed it to him, and spoke her speech that night after the Winstaples experiences, she had been full of generous unwillingness to perplex him by the smallest sign of a desire to know anything at all about it.

But now, on reviewing the case calmly, undazzled by the glamour of his presence, she does recall every light and shade that had made the incident a picture to her; and she does feel that she has not been quite fairly treated.

This is how it was. She handed him the likeness, as has been said, telling at the same time, “Mrs. Wilmot found this after Olive left, and gave it to me to-day to forward to Olive.” She had lifted her eyes to his, and hers were very full of faith, but, at the same time, there was a questioning look in them.

Instead of replying to this questioning look as she had half hoped he would, he had merely given her one of those long effective looks of his, from his deeply, darkly fringed blue eyes—a look that was very beautiful to behold in itself, and regarded as an abstract thing; but that was not entirely satisfactory to a girl who was craving to hear that “it all meant nothing.”

She can’t bear to do it, but in spite of all her efforts to the contrary she does admit to herself, as she sits alone this day, that “Philip’s going off to town in that way was very funny.”

Even the Hendersons didn’t know why he went; and what “made it more awkward,” poor Madge felt, was that to her he had said “family business called him,” while to Mrs. Henderson he had pleaded the necessity of seeing an old friend who was just on the eve of sailing for India.

She can’t bear either to look back or to look forward this morning. Behind her she sees quagmires of direct double-dealing and false pretences; and though she has passed over these in safety, how about the future? Will it be so again and again; or will the ground be all fair and firm—all in reality what it seems to be?

In her recently engendered doubtful frame of mind, Madge does what is very natural—tries, namely, to keep her anxieties and distrusts to herself, and so shun the observations of others. And it is so hard to do this in the village life where they all know, and like, and seek her; where they are all so familiar with her, that they talk of her marriage perpetually, honestly believing that it must be the pleasantest topic; and that in fealty to Queen Madge they must air it constantly.

Even Mrs. Henderson’s fine perceptions desert her, Madge thinks, a little pettishly, as a note from the Vicarage is put into her hand—a note of earnest entreaty that Madge will drive Mrs. Henderson over to luncheon at Parkavon, Griffith Poynter’s place. The excellent young man has a widowed aunt, and a host of cousins staying with him; and these latter are clamorous for amusement. In the innocence and loyalty of his heart, he does believe that the highest form of amusement to be offered to any human being is a sight of Madge Roden.
Philip has been four days away from Halsworthy, and to-day she has heard from him for the first time. Intuitively the girl feels, as she reperuses the letter just before driving off for her old friend, that it is not the letter a man would write to his “dear and only love,” though he uses the phrase. It is not the letter of the man she has waited for, shutting her heart the while against the advances of all others; it is not the letter of the lover for whose coming she has looked with as sweet and blind a faith as “Little Elsie” had when she sang,

“ar coming home: grooms are as stupid as—other men.”

Mrs. Henderson knows that there is a sore, and fears greatly to press on it. But there may be as much pain in silence as in speech. If Madge thinks that the subject of Philip is evaded, she will be justified in being hurt and annoyed. Mrs. Henderson collects the shattered remnants of her faith in the affair being a promising one, and says,

“Though he was a stranger to it three months ago, Halsworthy isn’t Halsworthy without Philip. I shall be so glad when he’s back—in his proper place.”

Silence on the part of Madge. Presently Mrs. Henderson is sorry to find she is not surprised to see that Madge is crying.

“My darling,” she says, tenderly, “supposing he were in either service, and ordered away for three or four years; compare your position with that of hundreds of girls who love and marry officers.”

“If he’d been ordered away and compelled to stay, I should be happy enough,” Madge says; “but I think he liked to go, and I feel he likes to stay. There, I’ve said it.”

Palpably the subject had better be dropped. Therefore Mrs. Henderson drops it, and Madge feels sorely that Mrs. Henderson is as doubtful as herself of the wisdom of all the work of the last few weeks. Accordingly they ruminate again for a mile, and then Mrs. Henderson makes another effort in what she firmly believes to be a perfectly safe direction.

“Have you heard how Olive is getting on, dear?”

“No; I wrote to her telling her of my engagement to Philip, but whether it’s ‘out of sight, out of mind,’ or whether she has never had my letter, I can’t tell; I only know that she has never answered it.”

“Perhaps Mrs. Tollington’s demands on Olive’s time leave the poor child too worn out for letter-writing, or perhaps—”

“Oh, please don’t,” Madge interrupts; “it doesn’t matter. I should never exact love and attention from any one who didn’t render both willingly.”

“What would you do, Madge?”

“Give up,” Madge says, firmly: “one can always do that, you know. Here we are; and, oh dear! I am too tired to care to speak to any one.”

Parkavon’s “portals open wide” to receive her. In other words, a footman opens the front door, and Griffiths runs from the drawing-room into the hall to greet her.

“Where’s Fletcher?” he begins with effusion, to cover the bubbling up of the bliss he feels in holding Madge’s hand, and looking into Madge’s face, in his own house. “I asked you to get him to come, Mrs. Henderson.”

“He’s in London,” Madge says, briefly.

“Come, Grif, take the goods the gods give you, and be thankful, and don’t hanker after the absent: I don’t.”

Philip says a great deal about the many slopes and dear shady glades of Moorbridge Park; a great deal about the happiness he has tasted there, and the charm of the girl who has made that happiness; a great deal about the Hendersons’ magnanimous kindness, and the generous view his aunt and cousins have taken of what he is pleased to call his “freak;” but absolutely nothing at all about what he is doing in town, or what detains him there.

“I have been a precipitate fool,” the girl can’t help asking herself, “or do men always let you go thus far and no farther into their real lives? It’s rather unfair. He knows all about, and I know—”

She dislikes finishing the sentence. After all, there is something humiliating in making full confession of knowing nothing at all of one’s future husband. So she sums up the first few bars of her favorite waltz by way of finale to her sentence, and tries to wonder “what Griffiths has got going on at Parkavon.”

It’s a long drive to Parkavon, and a long portion of the drive is through the “Poynter property.” The talk between the two ladies is of Griffiths and his belongings (naturally of them) for a while. They conjure as to the cousins and aunts. They speculate as to whether these latter will “try to marry Grif.” They surmise that, whatever they are, “they’re safe not to be half good enough for the dear old fellow.” “In fact,” Madge puts in with an uneasy laugh, “no one is but me. I ought to have married Grif myself.” And then silence falls on them, and they ruminate.

How Madge dreads the breaking of that silence. How she flocks her ponies with unwanted hope, hoping to make them fly over the ground that intervenes between themselves and Parkavon before Mrs. Henderson can say anything. How she almost gasps as Mrs. Henderson shakes silence off, and says with an effort,

“How is Philip; dear Madge?”

“Quite well, I suppose,” Madge says, becoming absorbed in the contemplation of the off-trace at once. “I hate driving these cobs on the check; I shall take them on the middle
"Does she mean it?" both Grif and Mrs. Henderson ask themselves, as she goes on with her fair face red as a rose. And it really seems that she does, as she turns to them, all color and animation, and says, "I like meeting strangers; where are your aunt and cousins, Grif?"

"In here," he says; and they go into a drawing-room, where seven ladies sit on seven chairs, working at seven pieces of lace-work. "My aunt, Mrs. Wainwright; my cousins, the Miss Wainwrights," he says, comprehensively. "Mrs. Henderson, Miss Roden;" and as he names Madge, such a gleam of pride in her, and longing for them all to admit that his pride in her is justifiable, irradiates his face, that Madge can't help contrasting the love that has never been told in words, with the other of which Philip is the exponent.

The Wainwrights are not essential to my story. They can not claim the honor of separate portraiture. A family group, hastily dashed in, is all that is necessary.

The mother is weak, widowed, wearifully anxious to see her daughters well married—or married at all. The daughters are big, buxom, all wearing chignon's of exactly the same shape and size, all speaking in exactly the same slightly strained and very artificial tones, all looking about the same age, and all hoping for the same end.

From the day the eldest reached the age of twenty (and the youngest is twenty now), Griffiths, their cousin, has been regarded by them as their legitimate and proper prey. They had each in succession grown up at him, and each failed to gain him. And each has felt inclined to resent the efforts of the one who has gone before as a piece of personal injustice toward the current fair foe to Griffiths's peace of heart. But the clannish feeling obtains with them greatly; and they are always ready to unite their forces and declare war upon any outsider upon whom Grif turns a commendiatory eye.

Madge Roden has been cited to them, quoted to them, extolled to them by unguard-ed Grif, until they have come to the pass of putting wrong lace stitches in at the bare mention of her name. At the sight of her, is it any marvel that they prick their fingers?

The seven chairs on which they sit become seven seats of judgment the instant she enters, and they all find her guilty of "designs" on Griffiths. For Madge, who brims over with cordiality and kindness, is being gracious to the full extent of her graciousness, is sharking hands with them all, and admiring the view, and saying how "nice the dear old room looks with a lot of ladies in it," in a way that the Miss Wainwrights denounce in the secret recesses of their souls as "simply audacious.

And all the while Madge's thoughts are wandering. Is it right—is it just to her sex that she, so petted and sought and made much of by other people who are nothing to her, should allow herself to be treated as a nonentity by the one who is every thing to her? She is longing, longing to ask Grif if all men are alike in this. But she remembers just in time that Philip does not like Grif, and so she forbears.

They have luncheon presently, and all the Miss Wainwrights giggle in subdued mirth in chorus, as something is said about the head of the table. When their mother is inducted into it, she regards each one of them deprecatingly, as if she would say, "I am ready to resign it to you, beloved child, at the lightest hint from him." But he does not offer the lightest hint, and they all sit down as guests, with Madge somehow as the honored one.

And how they hate her for this honoring to which they do not subscribe, and to which she does not aspire! They think she "means" so many things of which she is entirely guiltless. For example, they rather think that she thinks "their presence here at Parkavon may affect the influence she is trying to establish over Grif," on whom they look as one fated to be theirs eventually. And all the while they are thinking these things, and half hinting these things by their manner, poor Madge is striving not to be self-absorbed in her miserable half-doubts, half-fears about Philip—about her love for him and his for her.

It is a relief to her when luncheon is over, for she can't eat, and she knows that her want of appetite is being noticed, and sensitively dreads it being ascribed to the right cause. And shrinking from this, she confirms all the Miss Wainwrights' convictions that she is "a designing pass," by saying "yes" heartily when Griffiths asks her to go out in the grounds with him, and look at a new garden he has just had made at some distance from the house.

The Parkavon grounds lend themselves to picturesque gardening very well, for a river full of cascades runs through, and their undulations would be called hill and dale in another part of the country. This new garden is in the old romantic English style that obtained before Dutch stiffness and Italian artificiality set in. Through such a garden the gallant queen, who is always being picked to pieces in this age, because of her capacious heart, may have walked with Leicester, and Sussex, and Hunsdon, and Raleigh amidst the odors of roses, and jasmines, and gillyflowers, and sweet marjoram. Shaded by huge shrubs and trees, cooled by running water, rendered fragrant by the old familiar flowers that each of them had known from their childhood, it is no wonder that a sort of restfulness settles down on both Madge and Griffiths as they step into the bounds of the enchanted spot.

"I'm so glad you didn't bring a band of your cousins with us, Grif," Madge says, in a languid tone; "they will talk so much—in sentences—that it's hard work to listen to them, and harder work to answer; it's so sweet to sit and say nothing sometimes."
"You were never one of the very silent ones till—"
"Till?" she questions firmly, steadily fixing
her eyes on his, and braving herself to hear the
truth at last.

"Well—till your engagement," he says, hesi-
tatingly, blushing a good deal as he says it,
for Madge is still the dearest thing on earth
to him.

She shakes her head involuntarily.

"I suppose it's so with all girls, Grif," she
says, pleadingly; "it is, isn't it? It's such a
change; and one's past life seems to be all noth-
ing, and the future seems so very important and
uncertain; and it is so with all girls, isn't it,
Grif?"

There is an exquisite air of anxious appeal
in her eyes, in her voice, in her manner. But
Grif is nothing if he is not candid, so now he
says,

"Not with girls who are happily engaged, I
think, dear."

And Madge turns and leans on some railings
that are marking out the new garden still, and
her eyes look out steadily on the gleaming,
blooming flowers and the bright foliage, and
see nothing; and she can not contradict him,
or even argue with him.

As she stands thus, a bold, free footstep falls
upon their ears; and presently, as Grif is say-
ing, "People often stray in here from that
wood, through which there is a public right of
way," there comes through the bowery hedge
of shrubs the figure of a man—a stalwart, lithe,
supple-jointed man, who walks out freely, and
looks about him with interest. He is dressed
in rather common tourist garb—gray clothes
and a white felt hat, and he carries a knapsack
on his shoulders. He strides out well from the
hips, and his tones are those of a gentleman
decidedly, as he stops in surprise, doffs his hat
to Madge, and says,

"I fear I'm a trespasser. I've lost my way
in getting out of that wood; will you be kind
enough to tell me a short cut to the high-
road?"

There is the shadow of a something they
have seen before, both Griffiths and Madge
feel, as they look at this man and listen to him.
And he, meanwhile, is looking at Madge under
his level, lowered lids, and thinking, "Here's
the realization of my ideal of an English girl.
Lucky dog! that fellow by her side."

Griffiths Poynter has never in the whole
course of his life done a chilly act, or uttered a
repressing word. He feels, somehow or other
now, that it behooves him to make amends
for that seductiveness in his grounds which has
lured this wayfarer out of the right path. So
he says,

"Come on to the house, and have refresh-
ment at least. I can promise you dinner and
a welcome. My name's Poynter."

"And I," the other says, "am Philip Fletch-
er."

CHAPTER XIII.
A BREAKDOWN.

"Falser than all fancy fathom; falser than all songs
have sung."

Mrs. Tollington's little carriage has been
mended, and Mrs. Tollington's little ponies' nerved have been restored to their pristine
strength, and Mrs. Tollington's mortification at
having caused an awkward upset just when she
desired to shine as a female Jehu has evapor-
ated; and still her "rescuer," as she per-
sists in calling Mr. Philip Fletcher, calls daily
to make inquiries about her at the house on
breezy Blackheath.

His attentions are very pleasing to the fair
lady who rules in this house. He is handsome,
and he has the gay art in perfection of adapting
the style of his converse to his hearers. With
Mrs. Tollington he is disgusted to find himself
drifting into a feebly vivacious sentimental
strain, whenever Olive is out of the room. And
Olive, in spite of the momentary weakness—the
glorious weakness that will obtain while love
and the world lasts—which made her say, "Oh!
Phil," with much loving effusion, when Philip
picked her up from under the ponies' feet, and
called her his "darling"—Olive rarely stays
in the room with him.

As the magnet draws the needle, so Philip,
in spite of his troth-plight to absent, unsuspic-
ions Madge, is drawn by that house on Black-
heath. Daily he tells himself that "it isn't his
will or his wish that takes him there; it is fate
—and a precious wayward fate too." Courtesy
compelled him to call at first, and inquire for
the gushing, grateful wife of the man who was
soon coming home to be made an admiral.
And though she scarcely spoke or looked at him
on the occasion of that courtesy-call, still his
false feet and his false hopes carry him there
daily. At Mrs. Tollington's earnest request, be
it understood; for Mrs. Tollington has evolved
a theory in her own manoeuvring mind. She
has sharp sight, though her glance is but a
languid one, and she has taken keen note of
Olive's quick change of color, of the quivering
of Olive's eyelids, and the passionate droop of
Olive's eyes, whenever Philip Fletcher appears.
"She loves him, and has tried and failed to
catch him," the experienced matron thinks.
"It will do her good—teach her a lesson—to
get him to show her that he takes more plea-
sure in my society than in hers; though I am a
married woman, who never, of course, can be
any thing but a friend to me."

In her heart Mrs. Tollington calls Olive "a
sly, artful, specious impostor" for having said
what she did say about Philip the day the pho-
tograph came. "He has evidently had to re-
pulse her," Mrs. Tollington thinks; and she
moralizes over the "forwardness of some girls,"
and thanks Heaven she is not as they are.

In pursuance of her plan of teaching Olive a
lesson, she gives Philip Fletcher a pressing gen-
eral invitation to her house. "I will not lose
sight of my preserver," she murmurs, meaningly. "Captain Tollington must know and thank you when he comes home." She tells the story of the courage and self-devotion he displayed, "risking his life to save hers," when the two small ponies were tumbling about in their traces—tells it to all the social winds that blow about Blackheath, and they waft it everywhere. She claims him as her special Providence-provided friend, and gets him to walk in the lime-tree avenue with her, when she hopes that all the stalking sisterhoods she meets are heart-sore with envy at not being escorted in a like manner.

And Philip—selfish Philip—suffers the claim of friendship to be made, and seems to agree to it, and walks with her, and talks to her, and flatters her folly, and all for the sake of getting a look from Olive that is never given—a word from Olive that is never said. He loathes Mrs. Tollington's gratitude. He hates her assumption of friendship and intimacy with himself. He scornfully laughs at her evident belief in his interest in her. But he goes on flattering her folly, because she brings him near to Olive—brings him near to the girl he has renounced, whom he loves better than he will ever love any thing on earth.

And for what end is it that he does this after all? He knows that he has forfeited all right to long for that love. He knows that Olive will never let him touch the tips of her fingers again with tenderness. He knows that all this dalliance is the idlest waste of time—that nothing can come of it, save greater unhappiness to himself—and yet he goes on hovering about her, seeking to win some slight return from her with an intensity that startles himself almost.

He has his periods of remorse, too: the worst of us have them. His conduct to these girls is the "conduct of a blackguard," he knows, and he does not scruple to tell himself so. There is not a moment in the day when he would not; if he could, cast himself at Olive's feet, or clasp her to his heart, and cover her face with kisses. And yet he means to marry Madge! And the two girls know each other, and are friends; and he has sought them both so warmly! And well—he is "a secondrel," he knows. But still he goes yet again to Mrs. Tollington's house.

He arrives there one day, just after Mrs. Tollington has gone out for a drive with a friend, leaving Olive Aveland alone. It is a late autumn or rather early winter day, and Olive, in her restlessness, can't endure sitting in a bleak, fireless room. Mrs. Tollington's arrangements are all sumptuous as regards herself, but rather screwy as regards other people. It is her custom to spend a goodly portion of each day in her dressing-room, watching her maid altering and re-contriving her garments of price. Accordingly the fire is there, and the dressing-room is kept clean and chilly until the evening.

The companionship of the maid is no more agreeable to Olive than is the chill atmosphere of the drawing-room; accordingly she goes out into the rather pretty gardens, and walks about among the battered geraniums and mignonnette, and the stiff, sturdy dahlias and chrysanthemums, recalling there, as she did everywhere else, the shattered romance of her life.

If she could only crush her love for this man, who had shown himself worse than "unworthy," who had shown himself "regardless" of her, out of her heart! If she could only have a satisfactory answer to her prayer, that she "might be fickle," granted her! If she could only see some other man, whose eyes and hair, and tones and turns of thought, and walk and words, would haunt her!

Was it always to be going on like this, that she couldn't forget him, and ached horribly at the memory of him, or would he in time tire of others, and come back to her? Her heart bounded with joy at the possibility which she had conjured up. Some girls tell us they "have too much pride ever to think of a man who has slighted them." They may be telling the truth, but I know that Olive Aveland's love was not after this sort. If he had slighted her ninety-nine times, and caressed her the hundredth, she would have forgotten the slight, and enjoyed the caress as only a woman can.

In the agony of her mind, as she wanders about the damp garden-paths, she asks herself, What she can have done that she should be singled out to endure such pangs, such gnawings, as these? What can she have done? Why should other women, her inferiors in head and heart and beauty, be married to the men they loved, while she was left forlorn in this way? And what was there about Philip Fletcher to make him the one man on earth to her?

"I wish I could hate him," she mutters. "I wish I could laugh at him; how will he look when he gets old? Just like other men, with no teeth, and bald spots on their heads, and punchy figures. Oh! but I'll be old too, then, Philip; and all my youth will be passed without you!"

She walks fast, fast, faster, round the garden, and aches to have him beside her. "Though it would be no good if he were here—it would all end in nothing," she says, in a paroxysm of loving sulkeness. And just as she says it, he comes right into her path; for he has caught sight of her from the exalted door-step; and at sight of him, the girl goes into a paradise where fever rages at once.

They try to be conversational, and he tells her that he has come to call on Mrs. Tollington, and that, finding Mrs. Tollington out, he had ventured to walk round the garden, and "Won't you say you're glad to see me, Olive?" he pleads humbly, in such a low voice.

"Glad to see him!" How can she tell what she is, when she's trembling so that she can't make her breath come right, and can't regulate her steps? She takes two or three short, quick
ones, and then goes falteringly and slowly; and
she knows all the while that he is looking at
her with that concentrated gaze which she
once so loved to meet.

She calls herself a "fool," an "easily won
fool," and she can't succeed, the poor enrap-
tured child, in feeling anything like coldness
or aversion to the cause of her folly. All she
can feel is, "He has come! he has come to me."

Every thing protrudes itself distinctly, and
makes her abstractedly conscious of it; the
damp, yellow gravel-path, that looks rather like
bruised sponge-cake, glares at her, and the
lamp, hanging trusses of geranium, that were a
vivid scarlet before the last rain, lop forward
over the border and clamber for her pity; and
she can only walk on, just as straight as she
may, between all this vegetable matter that
seems to be sympathetically out of joint, and
wish, oh! so heartily, that she could dare to
snuggle her head down on the shoulder of the
man at her side, and there whisper out all her
love and doubt and agitation.

Is not this an ignominious and ill-regulated
state of feeling? "The creature!" to suffer
love to reign in her heart for a man who
was not ready with the offer and the Ring!
How horribly human, and detestably woman-
ly! Surely all Mrs. Grundy's daughters will
be advised to shun her, and to take no fur-
ther interest in her fortunes. To go on lov-
ing when it is no longer expedient to do so!
What a pity this poor Olive lacks the conve-
inent powers of unloving and forgetting directly
it would be advantageous for her to do it!

"Won't you say you're glad to see me?" he
repeats, and the truth is pressed out of Olive
by the repetition.

"You know what I am better than I can
tell you. I don't think it's gladness that I
feel, but madness!"

She says this last sentence in a whisper al-
most; and he realizes that, in the midst of her
passionate pleasure in seeing him, there is a
deep vein of hopelessness. Poor Olive! "Does
she know how utterly hopeless it all is?" he
wonders; "does she know about Madge?"

As he is thinking this, Olive probes the part
of the affair that gives her the most poignant
pain.

"When are you going back to Moorbridge
House, Mr. Fletcher?" 

"Don't call me that!" he cries, hastily. "I
can bear a great deal; but 'Mr. Fletcher' from
you, Olive, you won't—" 

"When are you going back?" she interrupts,
tottering almost on her feet as well as in her
judgment.

"Why do you ask?"

"I heard what you said just before we were
upset, the other day," she says rapidly, lifting
her eyes to his face, and meeting the look that
she knows has been in his eyes all along. "I
heard what you said, and I suppose I know
what it meant."

"It meant young men's chaff, Olive," he
says falteringly, for he is ashamed of himself
for prevaricating so meanly. "You're often
hearing from Halsworthy, aren't you? Mrs.
Henderson and Miss Roden have the name of
being capital correspondents."

"I have had one letter—only one—from
Madge Roden," she tells him; and then she
blushes fiercely and adds, "and that I tore up
without reading, because—"

"Because of what?"

"Because I thought it might hold news that
would hurt me!" she says, impetuously; and
then he stifies the cries of his conscience, and
resolves that she shall not hear of his engage-
ment yet. She had tried to evade it—had con-
fessed that she had tried to evade it; where-
fore, then, should he thrust it upon her? The
blow must fall in time, but just a little longer it
might be averted.

The agitation of her spirit is fretting and fa-
tiguing her physically. She feels literally that
every step taken exhausts her energies, and
leaves her mentally and morally more at his
mercy; and she knows that he has none.

"I have been walking for a long time, and
I'm tired: I must go in."

"Do you mean this as a signal for my de-
parture? After all, is five minutes' conver-
sation with me all the grace you have for me
now? How lightly you women can let most
things go!"

"Don't speak bitterly to me, Philip!" she
says, trembling a little at the pathos he can
put into his tones at an instant's notice, and a
little, also, with indignation at the calm au-
dacity which enables him to cast the burden of
his conduct upon her.

"Don't send me away, Olive? Sit down on
this bench, and let me tell you something.
Yes, you must hear it, though perhaps you
won't be interested, and will think me a fool
for my pains. I came down to the 'Trafal-
gar,' that day, solely with the hope of seeing
you. I felt as if I couldn't live without a
sight of you, and I should have walked about
Blackheath till it was granted me. Olive, why
did you leave that photograph behind at Mrs.
Wilmot's?"

"It was left by accident; and how did you
know it was left at all?"

"It was given to me, and I forwarded it.
That wretched woman flounced it all over the
market-place at Winstaple one day. Don't
you value it any more, Olive, that you leave it
behind you carelessly, to be commented on by
every idle tongue and vulgar mind?"

"Not value it? It's all that's left to me," she
says, sorrowfully. Then she hates herself
for what she calls the cowardice that causes
her to linger by him just so long as he pleases.

The subject of Madge Roden has a painfully
strong fascination for her. Surely, if Philip
were engaged to Madge, he would tell her.
That dreadful consummation has not been
achieved yet. Still, though she tells herself
this, she flutters back to the subject.
"When did you leave Halsworthy?"

"A fortnight ago."

"And how was Mrs. Henderson? Were they all quite well?"

"Quite well, thank you. Never mind Halsworthy now; tell me about yourself. Does that fool of a woman behave decently to you? Are you happy here, Olive?"

"Happy!" how can he ask her that? Why she couldn’t be happy in a palace of which she was the queen, if he were not with her; and he knows it—he must know it. She manages to say,

"Yes, she is kind enough. When do you go back?"

"Where to?"

"Why, to Halsworthy, of course; we were talking of Halsworthy."

"Talk of something pleasant, Olive," he says, eagerly; and now he can’t resist putting his hand on one of hers, which is resting on the back of the bench. With what wild joy that hand was once yielded up to him! remembering this, how can he dare to touch it now?

"How wrong all this is!" she cries, starting up; "how weak and wicked I am!"

"You weak and wicked, poor child?"

"Yes, to let you make me such a slave. Just think, if you had a sister, and any man tortured her as you do me!"

"I blame myself every hour of my life, Olive," he says, humbly; "you can’t say harder things of me than I think of myself."

This self-depreciation of his brings her down again.

"Oh, Philip! don’t think I mean hard things; but I get bewildered, and feel then that I must be awfully weak, or you wouldn’t treat me so."

"Let us be friends, if we can’t be more," he says, speciously. "To lose you altogether out of my life is a little more than I can bear, and I’ve borne hard things in my time, dear: Let us be friends; let me see you sometimes, and feel that you will turn to me as you would to a brother."

A great dry sob rises up and choked her; the tortures of Tantalus have been nothing to this. This is asking for bread, and being given a stone, with a vengeance.

"And when you marry, what will your wife think of our friendship—for you will marry, Philip?"

"If I said to you, ‘You will marry and forget me, Olive, and be false to the claims of friendship I make upon you,’ would you not feel that I was unjust and cruel?” he asks, in a hurt tone.

"Yes, because I am I; but you are you."
Then she collects all her strength; she interlaces her fingers, and presses them together to keep down any show of pain, and says,

"Is it Madge?"

He is not prepared for the question; he had really thought that he had cleverly drawn a boundary-line round the subject of himself and Olive, and that the latter would not overstep it. In his surprise, he tells the truth.

"Yes, it is."

"You are engaged to her?"

"I am, Olive, my love!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"HAVE I DONE WELL, OR ILL?"

MADGE RODEN is as self-possessed as it is desirable that any girl of twenty should be. She has played the part of young lady of the land, Queen of Halsworthy, and idol of the neighborhood, too long for any feeble embarrassing doubts as to her relative importance to come forward and cripple her on ordinary occasions. But this does not seem to her an ordinary occasion—this first rather romantic meeting with the real Simon Pure.

Here before her is the man about whom she has heard from her childhood as a hero, the man for whom she had almost unconsciously designed herself, and for whom she is very sure Mrs. Henderson had designed her; and he is the cousin of her future husband, and she ought to give him a welcome, and let him understand their future relationship at once.

"But perhaps I ought to leave it to Grif," she thinks. "Grif may imagine that I fancy he doesn’t understand etiquette, if I put myself forward before he has thought it necessary to introduce this walt and stray to me." So she marches on with her pretty, easy step by Grif’s side, and Philip Fletcher is left in ignorance of her name, for Grif forgets his part of master of these ceremonies.

"I’m going on to a place called Halsworthy," Philip explains, as he swings out with as free and light a step as if he hadn’t already walked twenty-five miles this day—"going to look up an old friend of my mother’s; do you know her—Mrs. Henderson."

"She’s in my house at the present moment,” Griffiths exclaims, delightedly. And then Philip, or Phil, as he is invariably called, leans forward and says,

"Then I am sure this is Miss Roden," and crosses over and takes the girl’s hand and adds, "Philip and I are like brothers: you must forgive me for telling you abruptly how glad I shall be to have you for a sister."

She takes in all the points of resemblance and all the points of difference between her Philip and this one at a glance. They have the same level brows, the same steady glance, the same easy, careless way. But her Philip is indisputably the handsomer of the two—handsomer, and half an inch taller.

They each hear a great deal and tell a great deal to one another as they walk back from the old English garden to the house. Phil, for instance, hears that Halsworthy is so many miles from Parkavon, and is told that, being so many, he had better make up his mind to be driven on
by Miss Roden, rather than walk there. And Madge hears several little incidents of his pedestrian tour down into this country briskly narrated, for Phil has the great merit of being lucid and brief—his narrations last about a minute and a half. His hearers are not compelled to distort their facial muscles in order to portray a feeling of interest which is quite dead. He is terse, picturesque, graphic. In short, he is amusing, without attempting to be facetious. And Madge finds him amusing, and Madge likes him for being so; and Madge in all her life never concealed a liking. "Oh! the pity of it that he didn't come before!" Mrs. Henderson's prophetic heart almost palpitates the words as he goes in, and makes himself known to her, and she feels that there is about him all the radiance of reality.

So like, and so unlike! At every turn they are reminded of that cousin of his who has wooed and won, and gone away so easily and carelessly and deceitfully. They can't help it. Mrs. Henderson and Madge catch themselves looking at one another, and interrogating one another mutely, as some of the absent Philip's very tones fall on their ears with a truer ring than "his can ever have," they feel in silence and in sorrow.

The young pedestrian is too tired to care to engage in the croquet match which Griffiths presently organizes; and so he is left with Mrs. Henderson, while the seven girls and Grif play that game, which is the strong point and sole remaining hope of the Misses Wainwright. For they play it well—very well indeed; driving interloping balls away into space, and helping those who can reward them for their help with the most consummate ease and skill. But, for all their ease and skill and amiability (displayed toward himself alone), Grif can't help wishing that they would let him get a word with Madge sometimes outside the reach of their keen ears.

To tell the truth, Madge is not very keen about croquet this day. She would far rather hear what this stranger, who is still no stranger, is saying to Mrs. Henderson. Finally inclination gets the better of her, and she begs a left-out Miss Wainwright to take her mallet and place, and asks Grif to order her pony carriage.

"You're going away very early," Griffiths says, discontentedly; and somehow he associates this new-comer with Madge's impatience to be gone, and hates the name of "Philip Fletcher" even more than he hated it when the other man who bore it was present. But, in spite of his discontent, he contrives to free himself presently from the trammels of croquet, and comes and stands close by Madge, to the trembling wrath of the Miss Wainwrights.

Madge is in such a thoughtful mood that she looks almost sad. She has been following many sudden springs of thought that have gushed up in her mind this day to their sources, and the result of her investigation is a stinging distrust of novelty and appearances.

"Grif," she begins gravely, not looking at the man she is addressing, but letting her eyes fasten themselves on a distant object that does not call for any attention from her—"Grif, you have known your cousins a long time, haven't you?"

"All their lives, I think," he answers, indifferently. He has no manner of feeling for or interest in his cousins, beyond the one of their being his blood-relations. He has no special liking, no faint admiration, for any one of them. On the contrary, now that he sees them near Madge, he marks all their inelegancies of feature, and figure, and manner with a perspicacity that would send the Miss Wainwrights' hearts down to dismal depths did they but know it. Happily for their current peace of mind, they don't know it. So they posture, and pose, and propel their balls about with a pleasant feeling of playing well, and impressing Grif with the fact.

"You will marry one of them by-and-by," Madge says, prophetically; and now she transfixes Griffiths with a glance, "and you will be so right, Grif."

"Marry one of them?—good Lord! no—not even if I had never known—I mean, if I had never seen any one else," Grif replies, hurriedly.

"My dear Grif, what nonsense!" Madge says tolerantly, with that immense air of superior knowledge and experience which is one of Madge's special attributes. "You think you won't now, I quite believe that; but I know how these things end generally, and I say you'll marry one of your cousins by-and-by, and you'll be so right."

In spite of his being some years older than Madge, in spite of his firm belief in her engagement with Philip Fletcher being her solitary love-affair, Grif has an unaccountable feeling of youth and inexperience steal over him as he listens to this girl. But he casts one look at the group on the croquet-ground, and that look strengthens him in the position he had taken at first.

"They're good sort of girls enough," he says; "but when it comes to marrying them, that's a different thing."

"Of course not 'em,' but one of them, Grif; you'll single out one in time, and then she'll seem so different to her sisters that you will wonder you hadn't seen her superiority to the rest all along; and then all your long knowledge of her will make you love her more, and you'll feel so happy and so safe."

He knows now, the sympathetic, generous, tender fellow, that she is contrasting her positive ease with his possible one. She has no long knowledge of her lover to fall back upon and make her love him more, now that he is away, trying her by his unnecessary absence.

"Well," he says, trying to think away the tears that will come into his eyes at the thought of Madge's distress, "we needn't talk about my marriage yet—not for many a long day.
I'd rather not talk about it at all to you now," he can't help adding in a matter.

"I don't suppose people ever are quite happy, whether they get what they want, or whether they lose it," Madge answers, following her spring of thought well home to its source, in firm reliance on Griff not taking the smallest advantage of her daring spirit of exploration. And Griff justifies her reliance, for he only shakes his head and says,

"Perhaps you're right; all the same, I'm sorry I lost what I wanted."

Madge is not a coquette by design, she has no greed for miscellaneous love and admiration, but she does like to keep alive what she feels to be the firm, true, and good interest which Griff has in her, and she in him. And so when she is saying good-bye to him this day, she uses the very words that a practiced coquette would use.

"As soon as you've settled on the one, Griff, let me know, that I may indorse your choice if I can. I shall be frightfully jealous and ex-acting for you."

He can't answer her in the half-real, half-bantering tone she has taken up. He can only gulp down a big ball of hopelessly passionate emotion. Why will she?—how can she like him so much and not love him a little? So he says nothing aloud, calls her his 'darling' in his heart, and as Madge drives away with her friends, he goes back to his cousins.

In spite of himself, Madge's words make him regard them in a new light. In spite of himself, he sees them all curiously in search of the possibility of one being a trifle superior to the others. And all hopes of finding that which he is searching for flees from him, as they chorus out some of their convictions respecting Madge.

"I wonder, with all that money, that Miss Roden hasn't married before, Griff."

"Why, she's young enough in all conscience," he says testily.

"Is she—young? dear me! young for an heiress, I suppose you mean. Seven or eight and twenty?—well, of course that's not old."

"Seven or eight and twenty!—she's not twenty-one yet; she's only waiting till she's of age to marry."

"Poor thing! How terrible for her to have gone off so. Then, if she is so young as that."

"Gone off! why she gets prettier and prettier every day," Griff says, indignantly.

"Oh! Griff, really we shall think, I don't know what—all sorts of things, if you pretend to see beauty in Miss Roden. No, no" (with a great air of magnanimity), "she's a nice amiable girl, unaffected and simple, and evidently desirous of pleasing; but pretty! no, no!"

"Fine feathers make fine birds," another Miss Wainwright remarks, with a vicious recollection of how becoming Madge's dress had been to her.

"No one can deny that her feathers were fine enough," a third strikes in; "rather over-dressed, wasn't she, mamma? Costly things on a girl like that can't be called good taste even by her most infatuated friends."

"It was amusing to see how eager she was to relinquish you, Griff, and to get hold of Mr. Fletcher," another Miss Wainwright cries, laughing a great deal too long and loud for the laughter to be genuine. "She was all eyes and ears for you at luncheon; and you see when he came she couldn't play croquet like the rest of us, but must go and stand near him and try to attract his attention. I suppose she thinks she may be as bold as she pleases: she can afford to make herself conspicuous."

"She never tried to attract any man's attention in her life," Griff says, hotly; "she has enough of it without trying."

"Now, Griff, don't be angry, but just wait and see if I am not right. While her lover is away, she will get up a flirtation with his cousin; she was pretending to take such interest in every thing he said, it was sickening."

And it is one of these women who say such things of her that Madge prophesies he will marry by-and-by.

* * * * *

During the drive home Madge is restless and vivacious. She describes the Miss Wainwrights to Philip; she mimics them; she laughs at them; she pulls herself up suddenly in frowning impatience at the thought of the very event she has suggested as possible to Griffiths.

And Mrs. Henderson, watching her with loving, anxious eyes, feels that the mirth and the mimicry are both false, and that Madge, her darling, is in the agony of a perplexity with which no outsider may dare to meddle.

Their conversation is cramped after all, directly she leaves off her mockery of the Miss Wainwrights. In the common order of things, Philip, the absent, ought to be, and would be, the topic. But it is treading on treacherous ground to speak of him to the man he personated while it served his purpose. Both Madge and Mrs. Henderson have a strong feeling upon them, now that they see him, of having defrauded this late-comer.

Moreover, Madge is rapidly becoming too angry with Philip for having gone in the way he has, and said in the way he has, to speak of him without a certain tremulous tone of voice that she is very much ashamed of. And in the midst of her refraining from all mention of him, she feels that it is due to herself not to shrink from the topic—due to Mrs. Henderson to let his cousin know as soon as possible that there has been no connivance on her dear old friend's part—due to Philip, her lover, to mention him without fear, and to show that she dreads no reproach concerning him.

And she can not do it.

Failing heart, and failing faith! How she tries to prop up both; how she tries to flatter herself back into blind belief; how she shrinks from a gleam of further light; how she regrets that the one who was meant to be the "real"
Prince of the first has come, and that he is so little disappointing. How she blames herself for all these feelings.

There is intense relief to her in getting home this day—intense relief in getting back to the old home where no harm has ever befallen her, and where she has never been more nor less than she is now, to all the loyal, faithful hearts who dwell there. A sense of relief and safety creeps over her as she flings the reins down and jumps out, and then remembers that she is mistress here, and says, quite freely and cordially,

"You must come and dine with us to-day, that you and my aunt may know each other, without delay, Mr. Fletcher. There is nothing out of the way in my asking him the first day I see him, is there?" she appeals to Mrs. Henderson; "for we are to be cousins, you know."

She feels that this is a superfluous reminder, as soon as she has uttered it; and so she tries to look and act as if she didn't, and is un-Madge-like altogether. Explanations, elaborations, all are foreign to Madge's nature.

"Why on earth should she try to speak of this subject before him?" Mrs. Henderson thinks, as they go to the room where Miss Roden senior awaits them.

Madge has got herself together in her progress from the hall door to the oak-wainscoted room, that still retained its ancient designation of "parlor" at Moorbridge. She is quite the Madge her friends all love to see her, as she goes gracefully and gallantly forward to her old relative, saying, as she goes,

"Philip's cousin is here, aunt—another Philip Fletcher; you must welcome him, for Philip's sake and mine, until you know him better."

"Another" Philip Fletcher is rather discomposing to Miss Roden, but she makes the best of the social jungle into which they have all rambled, and proceeds at once to talk polite conversation with immense old-lady power.

"You are just fresh from London, and the country must look very beautiful to you," she says, as if the country were all her own doing, and she did like to hear a word, in acknowledgment of its superiority to every thing else on earth, uttered at times.

"Yes, very beautiful," he says, looking at Madge, and thinking of Madge, and utterly failing to grasp the entire meaning of old Miss Roden's words, "very beautiful, but—"

"—But not for me," is what would be the conclusion of his sentence, if old Miss Roden, in her ardent desire to confute what she considers a compromising mention of the natural beauties of Halsworthy, didn't interrupt him.

"But—now you're not going to tell me that you think it too cramped and low? I won't hear it. See the expanse—the bold sweep above it?"

For a wild moment, Philip Fletcher thinks that Miss Roden is speaking of Madge's brow, and Madge's glorious arching head. Then he collects his faculties, knows that he is misunderstanding her, and making an idiot of himself, and answers,

"Do believe me, I think all I see perfection. I never dreamed of such an earthly paradise as this in which I find myself."

"And you will find yourself in it very often, I hope, by-and-by, when your cousin is master here," Madge says, gallantly, though the corners of her mouth twitch painfully as she speaks. And then she leaves him, with that last speech of hers ringing in his ears, while she goes to dress for dinner.

Madge Roden is no coquette. She does not desire to deck her beauty in this stranger's eyes, for the sake of making them smart with an admiration which they should not express. Nevertheless, the taste of the woman will have it so. She puts on a white dress, and then tries ribbons of various colors against her cheeks and hair, to see which suits her best. And at last she doffs the white dress, and dons a cream-tinted one, with which some sweet wild-rose pink harmonizes admirably.

And she puts her rich hair in cloudy ripples over her brow, and commands the sweet, transparent lines of her mouth to "be still," and tries hard to regulate the sparkling measure of her eyes. And when she has done all these things, she goes down, knowing that she is looking her best, and that her best is a very fair thing.

So they all dine together (for Mr. Henderson has been summoned by special messenger), and Madge is a suppressed young hostess, because she will put her dear old aunt so prominently forward. But, for all that suppression, she is quite enough of a queen to command attention from this one who looks upon her for the first time.

She sees that he is noticing the effect of each shade and each ribbon. She feels that he appreciates her taste in setting forth such beauties as she has. And so when he comes near her in the course of the evening, and touches her dress, and says (letting the light fall on its semi-transparent texture),

"Is this idealized silk, Miss Roden, or is it a thing that every-day women may buy and wear?"

"Yes, at six-and-eightscore a yard. And how exactly you are like my Philip; he raves about this color," she says, with a great big effort at being all she ought to be. And then she concentrates herself, and asks him the question she has been longing to ask ever since he came upon her unexpectedly in that revised old English garden.

"Have you seen much of him in town?" He must have been so sorry that you came away just as he went back."

She says itquiringly, wistfully, dejectedly, and he does not know how to answer her. He has been loving and loyal to his ne'er-do-well cousin all his life, but his love and loyalty are most sorely tried now. "Graceless as he is,
how can he fritter away such an opportunity? the true Philip questions. But no answer is accorded him, and he has to say something.

"I've been unlucky enough to miss him," he says, vaguely. "In town, you see, your time is not your own, and you're always missing the very people you want to meet. It's always a white-stone day to me, when I do meet Philip," he continues with energy; and Madge looks at him with a gaze that seems to penetrate into his soul.

The girl is a puzzle—a sublime puzzle to him. Is she acting, or mad, or only childish? Still, when she suddenly leans nearer to him, and asks,

"You can tell me!—have I done well or ill? The truth now—the truth!"

He pauses. Shall he speak it?

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CHAPTER XV.

DESPAIR!

"Love can hope when Reason would despair."

ENGAGED to Madge! owning his engagement! Standing there before her, with that love-light in his eyes, affianced to another woman! Olive tries to take in the truth, and can not.

It is the very worst that has come upon her now, she tells herself, and her hands even seem numb with this pain that can't be combated, with this deadly assailant of her peace that can't be grappled with. There is something terribly piteous in the girl's utter inability to be other than fond of him still, though he has been so faultless to her.

He proceeds to explain, and extenuate—after the manner of men. And, after the manner of women, she listens, and is lenient.

"I can't tell how it came about," he says.

"It would all have been different, you know that, Olive—if you hadn't cast me adrift in the way you did; and Madge—"

"Don't say a word about Madge," she shivers, and then she adds, in her fruitless, candid wrath,

"I could trample on the throat of any other woman in the world who crossed my path. How you ought to love her!"

He is sitting on the bench still, his arm resting on a rusted, half-decayed table in front of it, his face bent down, and his soul sick with the conviction that he will always go on missing the best that the world can give him. And she is standing about before him, wrapping her shawl around her and loosening it, resting now on one foot and now on the other, feeling it equally hard to be near him and to go away from him, greedily divining every expression of his face, and feeling them all so unsatisfying.

She recalls every lingering pressure of the hand, every love-lighted glance, every endearing epithet that he has lavished upon her lately, and she longs, she yearns, to be told that they were not all a cheat. This love that he had depicted with such deceiving skill—is it all a lie?

"How could you do it?" she gasps out; and this is the only accusation she makes, but it pierces through his selfish coat of mail.

"If I could undo it, I would," he stammers out earnestly. "But that would only be persecuting myself to her, and doing no good with you. Forgive me, Olive!"

He rises up and goes to her as she flutters about in her misery on the gravel-path, and holds his hands out, and bends his head down toward her in a deferentially loving way that makes her brain whirl and her heart beat; and he is Madge's Philip, she recollects, and, after this day, all interest in him must be crushed out of her heart.

But still, for all this saving recollection, she lets him take her hand and draw her to him, and a thrill of rapture relieves her anguish for a moment as he says, "I love you, Olive—I've always loved you: believe that of me to the end."

Her white, wistful face lifts itself up, and deep in her eyes he reads a portion of the passionately intense misery that he has inflicted upon her. This is love, he knows; such love as gracious, happy Madge will never lavish upon him; such love as can only exist in the heart of a girl who has a strong element of recklessness in her nature.

He remembers well how he labored strenuously at first, long ago, to make this girl care for him; remembers how carefully he planted the love that looked so fair a flower, and that has turned out such a noxious weed to poor Olive, who nourished and cherished it. He remembers how he left her; how he wooed her by every means in his power when accident threw them together again. And as he remembers all these things, he loves her as he knows he will never love another woman, be the other good, kind, and fair as an angel.

"Olive," he says, pressing her hands together in his own against his breast, "my darling, I've been mad, I think—mad, to believe that I could exist without you, without your love and kisses—mad, to imagine that Madge Reden's cool, complacent regard could ever compensate me for the loss of your thrilling words and tones. Let us be what we were before: be my wife, and, whatever comes of it, I shall be happier with you than without you."

She shakes like a reed in his strong embrace; her brain can't clearly entertain this idea which he has put before her as such a plain possibility, when only the minute before it had been such an utter impossibility. "His wife!" She whispers the words as he stoops and kisses her wildly, desperately. And then she understands every thing as he ceases, and looks away from the face he has been gazing at with such rapture, and she sees he is pale and gloomy.

But still his hand caresses her silken hair;
It will taint all my life, Philip, but I'm glad I've had it.

There is something glorious about the girl as she says this. Philip recognizes something of the devotedness of her nature, and can't help appealing once more to it.

"You'll never hate me, will you, Olive?"

"Hate you! gracious, no," she answers, impatiently. "Hate you! why I could be happy if I could hate you, or get indifferent to the sound of your name and the thought of you, What a comfort it would be to forget you!"

He adds, abruptly. "What a comfort to marry some kind fellow, and forget you!"

He looks at her wonderingly; is her mind going? He half fears that it is, and a poignant pang of remorse is his portion for an instant. Then she relieves him of that dread by saying,

"Don't think me distraught or dreadful at all. for saying that: most girls would have had the thought in their minds, and not have said it; but I don't think it worth while to have any further concealment from you. I can't sink any lower in your estimation—"

"Olive!" he interrupts, in real dismay.

"I mean it, I know it," she goes on imperiously.

"Didn't you look at me didn't you show me as plainly as you ever showed a fact to a fool in your life before—just now, that you felt woefully sad at the idea of my becoming your wife? I saw your rage at your own honorable weakness. I saw your dread at my taking advantage of it. I saw the depth to which I had fallen, and—I can't clutch at the straw of a shadow of reticence any longer."

"You have conjured up a wrong—created an insult," he cries, in real distress.

"I asked you to be my wife, and you turn upon me and overwhelm me with an amount of self-abasement that's ten times harder for me to witness than any scorn of myself would be; you held me in your hand, and flung me—"

"Where you directed me," she bursts out.

"It's over and done with, and now this is life's farewell to the hope of a moment. Good-bye, Philip; try never to let me look at your face again.

She is holding out both hands, and he touches them and turns from her, bitter and broken in spirit, crushed and humbled, and sorely sick at heart.

And she stands there with the damp mists gathering about her, and the low moaning wind sounding in her ears, muttering "good-bye, good-bye," as long as she can see him.

"It was their last hour—a madness of farewell." There can be no more pain in this world for her, she tells herself as she slowly walks in. After this, nothing can hurt her; after this, nothing can humiliate her; after this, nothing can surprise her.

She shrinks with an altogether unaccountable shrinking from going in and facing Mrs. Tollington, for she hears that lady's chariot-wheels coming along the drive. Is it possible
that cruelly has made her a coward? No, no; Mrs. Tollington and every other atom of humanity will be powerless to distress her from this time forth.

So she tells herself in her ignorance.

The day is dark, dreary, and damp. It cannot be the bracing atmosphere, therefore, that has imparted this unwonted flush to Mrs. Tollington's fair face. That lady greets Olive with a keen, flashing glance, with a sharp, cutting inquiry.

"May I ask, Miss Aveland, why you entertain gentlemen surreptitiously in my absence, with whom you appear to be on most distant terms in my presence?"

The fair, delicate-looking woman has a power of spiteful fury about her in spite of her limp languor. Like a cross cat's, her eyes change from their normal hue of blue to sparkling, scintillating green as she interrogates Olive, and waits for Olive's reply. "Appearances are against her again," Olive feels with a qualm, and, as she feels it, she knows that there are other stabs that wound frightfully, besides those that are given in love's conflict.

She makes an effort—a supreme effort to be coherent and collected, and says,

"Mr. Fletcher called on you, and, not finding you at home, he chose to come into your garden: it is not my place to turn your friends out."

"A false, paltry, pitiful evasion," Mrs. Tollington cries, in shrill, insulting tones that she would not venture to employ toward her cook or house-maid. "Maria saw what was going on from the window; and I'm ashamed of you, Miss Aveland—ashamed that such deceit and depravity should exist in one whom my husband trusted so-o blindly."

Mrs. Tollington raises her voice, as she says this, in a melodramatically hysterical way, and Olive knows that the servants are in the hall listening, giggling, delighting in her call to account for what they will consider a sly and underhand interview with "her young man." She knows it, and her shaken strength gives way as she realizes that through him she may be again cast out, as she was from Mrs. Wilmot's, with a stain on her fair name. There is no pity in the vain, mocking, triumphant face opposite to her. Down goes her last barrier of defense, her self-possession, and she sobs out,

"Oh! Phil, Phil, it is hard!"

"Upon my word," Mrs. Tollington flings out the words with vicious velocity, "this is a little more than I can endure. If you are not engaged to Mr. Fletcher, you must please to leave my house at your earliest convenience. Nothing short of a positive recognized engagement could make me sanction such extremely indecent conduct."

"I will leave your house at once," Olive says, starting up.

"You are not engaged to him, then?" Mrs. Tollington cries, with an eager interest that she herself would have instantly denounced as criminal if exhibited by any other married woman.

"That I decline to tell you," poor Olive says, trying to speak coolly, and feeling, in the midst of her misery, a tiny thrill of satisfaction in baffling the curiosity of the insatiably vain creature who believes that, but for her Tollington, every man who comes near would instantly offer to lead her to the altar. And Mrs. Tollington makes up her mind that she will give that "exceedingly imprudent young man the benefit of the doubt, and extract the truth from him concerning Olive at the earliest opportunity. A sweet sympathetic friend is such a safeguard to a young man," she tells herself. And she resolves to be that safeguard to him at their next meeting.

But, in the mean time, Olive (whom she involuntarily fears) must go.

A dreary hour or two of packing up ensues, for Mrs. Tollington has said that she must go, and Olive has no desire to stay on sufferance. But the faithful, bruised heart is very despairing, as she reflects that, when she goes from this callous creature's house, she has no friend to whom she can turn for protection, comfort, refuge.

For she would rather lie down and die of her desolation at this juncture than go back to the good, loving, generous-hearted young mistress of Moorbridge House "who holds Philip in her toils."

There is abominable bitterness in Mrs. Tollington's last words to her.

"Until this affair is cleared up, don't apply to me for a recommendation: I couldn't conscientiously give you one. The way you have practiced on Captain Tollington's credibility is too distressing to me."

"A less devoted wife than you are might be suspected of frantic jealousy concerning Mr. Fletcher." Olive finds the courage and the voice to say these words, and then drives away, leaving behind her a foe who will neither forgive nor forget—or forbear.

Philip Fletcher meanwhile has gone back to town with the doleful feeling upon him that he has done with the best part of his life, and that all that is to come, thoroughly authenticated as it is, will be dull, tame, and unprofitable.

But still he assails his conscience, and tells himself that it is Olive's vacillation, Olive's hesitation and weakness, which have brought things to this pass.

"If she'd only had the pluck to take me at my word, without going into heroics," he thinks, half-regretfully, during the first half hour after leaving her. But, by the time the train palpitates into the London Bridge station, Philip is sufficiently himself again to feel,

"It's a jolly good thing that Olive had more prudence and consideration than I had just now. A fellow who jilted Miss Roden could never hold his head up in society again."

By way of compromising with the Nemesis which he begins to think it just possible may
"HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID."

overtake perfidy in time, Philip writes to Madge Roden, as soon as a good dinner at his Club has restored his mind and body to their just balance.

Writes a long, loving, amusing letter to Madge—the sort of letter that lingers in one's mind, by reason of the many pleasantly turned sentences (none of them too long) that abound in it—the sort of letter that shows a man recognizes the "mind" as well as the "heart" claims of his future wife.

"All business that keeps me from you is of necessity hateful to me," he concludes. "I am thankful to say my business is finished, and I'm free to go back to dear Halsworthy."

CHAPTER XVI.
A FALSE STEP.

He can not give earnest, unbiased consideration to the question Madge has thus unexpectedly propounded to him, because of the entreaty in her eyes. A vague idea hovers about in his mind that this girl, who is as little artificial, and as fair and sweet as a wild rose, has not "done specially well" in engaging himself to his cousin, who has no particular claims to be regarded as anything but a scamp. But he also has a vague idea as to the traditional fate of the man who interferes. So he steps off the delicate ground on to which she has suddenly whirled him, and says,

"That remains to be proved; but, at a venture, I should say that it is impossible for you to do ill."

"You are what I ought to be—reserved," she says, gently; and then she remembers the relationship between the man of whom she is thinking and the man to whom she is speaking, and adds generously,

"I shall tell Philip, as soon as he comes back, that I gave you an opportunity of saying something chilling and unpleasant about our engagement, and you did not take it."

"I shall never be able to say anything that isn't warm and pleasant about it, for I can never feel anything else," he answers in simple faith, believing that he can guarantee his conduct for the future, as honestly and fearlessly as he can let the light of day upon it in the past.

"And your mother and sisters, will they like me too?"

"Like! they'll love you," he replies, quickly; and Madge nods her head backward and forward, and says, abstractedly,

"For Philip's sake. Well, you must all be very fond of him; the readiness to like me proves that. You must be very fond of him."

"We are," he says briefly; "but it would be very difficult matter to be very fond of you, even if we were not of him."

"But they don't know me yet," she says, startled out of the quiet composure which has been her portion all the evening. And he knows that in some way his tongue has slipped, and words have fallen from it that it would have been better to have left unuttered. And so he compels himself to be commonplace and a little crushing.

"You won't accept the little compliments that are common coin, Miss Roden. You're right: I'll never offer you one of the sort again. No, they don't know you yet; but when they do, I have no doubt that you will all get on capitably together for Philip's sake."

She is conscious of being mortified—conscious that her mortification is showing itself in the heightened color and foolish glistening of the eyes which mortification is accustomed to display. The impulse to recover her self-possession by the means of forcing him to confess that his last words were not uttered in sincerity, is strong upon her. But she curbs it—conquers it—puts it down under her feet and tramples upon it.

"I would get on capitably with any one, for Philip's sake," she says. And Phil thinks that it must be a fine thing for "a fellow to get a girl to love him so entirely" as Madge portrays that she does by this speech. Little he knows how far more entirely another girl loves that spendthrift of affection, his graceless cousin.

Presently (they neither of them know that it would be well for them to separate on the spot, and never strive again to excite a particle of interest or emotion in another's breasts) Philip tries to extricate himself from the web of perplexity this girl is innocently weaving around him, by saying,

"How rapidly one adapts one's self to new relations: here we are talking as if we were brother and sister already—"

"Are we?" she interrupts, doubtfully.

"Now, to my mind, brother and sister would have spoken a truth or two to each other that you and I are holding back. I'll try to do my part now. I wish you had come down when Phil was here first!"

"Why?" he asks, without intending to ask it, after the manner of the majority who indulge in questions.

"Because, if you had been here with him, the temptation to personate you would never have been put in his path; and it's that you all, yes, every one of you think of, and seem to extenuate when you speak of him to me."

"I never did, Miss Roden," he says, hurriedly; "really, I never thought of it as other than a foolish or, say, a wild burst of effervescent spirit that has ended in the soberest delight. The end justifies the means, even if the means had been far more reprehensible than they were."

He says all this sketchily, clumsily, angrily, for he knows that she will not believe him. And Madge adds to all these uncomfortable feelings by replying,

"I give up at once, if you say things in sentences to me—sentences that other people
have arranged. I can't attend to you, and I can't answer you, and I can't believe in you!"

Thus far they go, this first day of meeting, and to all outward seeming it is a very little way. But Madge is gifted with what must prove to be either a great blessing or a great curse to her, namely, an exceptionally good memory. She not only never forgets what other people have said to her, but she always remembers what she has said to them. And so, when the exigencies of life in Halsworthy bring her into communion with Phil the following morning, she remembers, and remembers with a blush, that her own words have put him on his mettle to be as frank with her as seems good to him.

Contrary to her usual habit, Mrs. Henderson has avoided making Madge her theme during the brief period which Phil the genuine has spent with her (Mrs. Henderson) alone. Sad recollections clog the ordinarily fine utterances respecting Madge which all who know Mrs. Henderson are accustomed to hear from her lips. She thinks of all those idle hopes and wishes which she had indulged in respecting this pair whom fate has thrown together, now that honor forbids the realization of those hopes and wishes. She is a good, thoroughly human woman; and though there is something sacred to her in the first pledge of love made by a pure young girl, she is full of sympathy for the possibilities which might have been, if only Philip the true had come first.

Accordingly she does not dare to make Madge her topic; does not dare to respond when he strives to make Madge his topic. He is much impressed (so much is evident) by this girl whom his cousin has won for his bride; she has interested him; if he only suspected how much, he would leave Halsworthy to-day.

It is in vain that Mrs. Henderson tries to talk to him about his mother, his sisters, his own prospects: his attention wanders, and he gives vague answers, and vague fears enter in and abide in Mrs. Henderson's heart. "Yet after all," she asks herself, "what can happen? It is not in Madge to play fast and loose with a mouse, much less with a man."

But, for all these re-assuring speeches which she makes to herself, the vague fears go on obtaining dominion and enfeebling her nerves. She is conscious that she is presenting herself in the character of a bore to the son of her old friend, when she assiduously knocks down every little subject connected with Madge which he sets up. She is conscious of the fact, but, in her dismayed perplexity, she can't help herself; for she knows that she has aided in weaving the web in which Madge is getting entangled.

Presently he says (and her anxious ears fancy that he says it hesitatingly),

"I accepted an offer of a horse for to-day from Miss Roden, and said I would go there about twelve for it."

As he looks at his watch, Mrs. Henderson sees in his bent face more beauty, more power, more feeling, than she has ever seen in his cousin's—sees it, and sorrow at seeing it, for Madge must see it too.

"I will walk up with you," she says, feeling that he is intrusive, suspicious, ungenerous, and yet not daring to remain quiescent. "I want to speak to Aunt Lucy; we may as well go up together."

So they go up together, and find Madge lounging in a big chair before a big fire, making no pretense of doing anything but shiver.

"I tell her she has caught a chill, and I want her to go and walk it off, or ride it off," Aunt Lucy says, anxiously appealing to the visitors to second her advice. And Mrs. Henderson turns a deaf ear to Aunt Lucy's words, and says with outward boldness and inward terror,

"Is it a chill, Madge; or are you disappointed by not having had a letter from Philip?"

"I have had a letter from Philip, and he is coming back at once," Madge says, with animation. Then she takes his letter from her pocket, and reads the last words of it: "I am thankful to say my business is ended, and I am free to come back to dear Halsworthy."

"I am so glad you two will be here together," she adds, looking up at Phil, and unexpectedly surprising him with the look of that interest in his eyes of which he is unconscious yet.

"What business can Philip have in town that we don't know of?" he catches himself wondering; but aloud he says,

"I'm glad, too. I have been looking forward to some days on old Exmoor with him.

Madge folds her letter up, pockets it, and subsides back into her chair again, and Aunt Lucy's quick eyes detect a tiny shiver.

"You have taken a chill, I'm sure of it, Madge; and nothing ever cures your colds so quickly—before they come to any thing," she explains in parenthesis—"as a gallop on the moor. The air is so beautiful and fresh, you know, Mr. Fletcher, that it's physician and nurse at the same time, my poor brother used to say."

"I really think Madge had better nurse her cold to-day, instead of going out." Mrs. Henderson feels a fresh crop of fears spring up with each sentence that Aunt Lucy lets fall. With a keen, sudden glance Madge detects these fears; with an equally sudden resolve she determines to brave them. For the first time in her life, she is angry with her old friend; for the first time in her life, she feels inclined to rebel against that old friend's advice. For she has done nothing, has thought nothing, has felt nothing, that can justify this dawning suspicion.

"I think Aunt Lucy is right," she says, resolutely: "a gallop on the moor will do me all the good in the world. I caught a chill from the cold looks of those cousins of Griit's. I shall forget them when Brunette and I have had a burst." And she rises up and lays a hand on Mrs. Henderson's shoulder, and gives
a look of innocent, comical defiance that makes Mrs. Henderson's heart ache with love and fear.

"Will you ring the bell for me, please?" Madge says, looking at Philip; and as he obeys her, she utters the words that Mrs. Henderson has been expecting and dreading:

"Didn't you say you'd ride to-day?"

Before he can answer, Aunt Lacy interposes:

"Then you'll have an escort, dear—much nicer for you than riding alone; and Madge won't have a groom behind her on the moor," she adds to Mr. Fletcher.

And so, through no effort on his own part, it comes about that Phil goes out for a ride with Madge. And as he swings her up to her saddle, as he marks her grace, her ease, her skill, her beauty, his heart beats high with pleasure, the source of which he does not pause to analyze.

The horses afford them subject of conversation for a short time. The great merit of her good brown mare, Brunette, is a theme of which Madge is never tired. For the sake of making Madge eloquent, Phil ventures upon ground which is foreign soil to him.

"I thought ladies liked something rather slimmer than Brunette," he begins, scanning the strong, big brown mare with what he means to be a critical eye.

"Weedy horses are all very well for the flat," Madge says, carelessly, though in her heart she is annoyed at the least reflection being cast even in ignorance upon her favorite's splendid proportions; "but, for a hilly country, bone and muscle are as requisite as beauty and breeding—aren't they, Brunette? and you have all four, haven't you, Brunette?"

"Brunette is on a grand scale, and her manners have all the repose of caste," Phil laughs: "but I thought ladies who rode well liked horses that shied about and showed off."

Madge turns lightly about the eighth of an inch in her saddle, and leans her hand on the back of the saddle and surveys him calmly and closely for a moment.

"Now why will you talk of what you know nothing about, for the sake of saying something, when we would both of us just as soon not speak?" she says, quietly. "How do you know I ride well?"

"How do you know that I know nothing about it?" he retorts, laughing.

"I'll prove my ascertainment by putting you to the test of asking you to prove yours. I do ride well—of course, I know I do; now you tell me how you know that I do."

"The effect is superb, and it would not be superb if you failed in any one promoting cause."

"Polite, but not satisfactory," Madge says, meditatively; "however, what are the promoting causes?"

"Your figure, your skill, your courage, your grace," he cries, laughing delightedly; for all this brings him into greater intimacy with Madge, and little reck he what that intimacy will eventually cost them both.

"Less and less satisfactory, Mr. Phil. Now listen: I've seen a woman with the figure of a Venus, and the grace of a Lady Hamilton, and the courage of a lioness, ride awkwardly and badly. I'll tell you why I ride well, you poor, dear ignoramus, and then when you want to win some lady's heart by subtle praises of her horsemanship, you won't blunder and say flattering words of the performance that prove you to be stronger in faith than in knowledge."

"I shall never try to win any woman's heart by flattering her," Phil interrupts; "indeed, I doubt if I shall ever try to win a woman's heart in any way."

"'Pooh! nonsense!' Madge says, prosaically. "Why should I?" Phil asks foolishly, with gathering gloom; "what am I, and what have I to offer, that any woman worth marrying should give me a second thought, much less a thought of love?"

As he pauses here and looks at Madge, she feels she ought to say something. All she can think of saying is,

"Really, I don't know."

"No; nor does any one else," he laughs, and recovers himself, and Madge makes an effort to change the current of the conversation.

"We have wandered from our text: shall I take up the broken thread and tell you the what and the why of my riding well?"

"Tell me—anything you like," he answers, beginning to experience that rare delight in the mere sound of her voice which one does experience weakly enough once or twice in a lifetime, in the voice of a fellow-creature.

"Listen, then: my figure might be fifty times as good as it is (no, it's not 'impossible'), and if I couldn't bend from the waist, and didn't sit back, and down, and square, I should look like a sack if I were fat, or a stick if I were thin; and I might have three times as much courage as I have, and it would avail me nothing if I bungled with my reins, or worried her mouth, or let Brunette feel for an instant that I wasn't ready for any impromptu performance to which she might treat me; and—"you're not listening one bit!"

In her ardor she has turned round and looked at him, and his eyes are fastened upon her with a gaze in which there is not the faintest shadow of attention to what she is saying. There is a glow on his face, a light in his eyes, that some other thoughts and interests have conjured up.

The spell is broken. With almost a groan he recalls himself from a dazzling possibility that some demon had been dangling before his mental vision. The present is all that is his. And he dares not turn even that to advantage.

"I'm not an apt pupil, I fear," he says, sadly. "Never mind; the knowledge will never be useful to me in the way you proposed just now."

And as he says this, his horse puts his foot
into a grass-grown hole, and Phil is flung forward some yards on the turf, where he remains without moving.

CHAPTER XVII.
FURTHER ASTRAY.

A moment before he had been so animated, brilliant, full of life and vivacity; and now he lies flat on his face, motionless, with that inert look about his form that is so full of ghastly suggestions of concussion of the brain or spine.

Every one who has been much in a hunting-field must have experienced some at least of the sensations that besat Madge in an instant. The shock, the horror, the sympathy, all these are felt by every one who sees either a man or a woman thrown from a horse, unless either he or she promptly picks him or her self up again. All these Madge felt now—and she felt something more.

A blinding bitter grief thatstartles her as the thought, "He is dead," forces itself into her mind. The shaking hands can hardly guide intelligent but bewildered Brunette to the spot where he lies. The throbbing heart impedes her breath, so that she gasps as she springs down and bends over him. Trying to realize—dreading to realize how much he is hurt.

The gray horse, whose false step has caused the mishap, is grazing in a doleful manner on a patch of bracken close by. Brunette's snaffle-rein is over her mistress's arm. Madge, and these two horses, and a few stray rabbits and the trout in the stream, are the only living creatures near the man who may be dead or dying.

The desolation of it all strikes her forcibly, and with a wailing sob she kneels down and puts her arms round his neck, and strives to lift his head and turn him on his side. She touches him tenderly, lovingly, as she would a flower or a baby, and as she puts him in his new position, Brunette puts her soft warm nose against his cheek and gives an inquiring snort.

The sound or something touches some hitherto dormant spring of vitality, and Madge can't check a cry of joy as Phil opens his eyes. One arm is round his neck still, and she is bending so low in her efforts to move him that her quivering lips are almost touching his cheek. Before he realizes the dazzling vision, she has released herself, and is standing by his side.

For half an instant he blinks in perplexity, and then he too rises to his feet, "unhurt in brain or spine, thank God," she feels through every fibre of her frame, "but rather confused by a blow on the temple."

"Stunned, I suppose," he explains; "have I been lying there terrifying you long?"

"It seemed hours, but it can't be really," Madge confesses; "only I thought you were dead, and—it seemed a lifetime."

"Awkward of me not to see where I was going," he says with some vexation, expressed in tone and manner; "you were right, Miss Roden, I don't know any thing about riding; it was unpardonable to give you such a fright."

"Never mind that; the joy of finding you're not hurt much is the greatest I have ever had in my life," Madge replies unafraidly, and so earnestly that it brings some of the life's blood back to Philip's brow; "you'll like to go back now, after such a shaking?" she adds.

"It would be wiser," he says, slowly, looking at her, and not thinking a bit of the shaking his fall had given him, "but I'll beg you to let me be foolish just for once; let us go on."

She protests and argues against going on so vainly for a while, until he assures her that he feels "no ill effects whatever from his fall," and then she gives in, and they mount their horses again, and ride on across the lonely, lovely moor.

Brightly the sun shines on the fading heather and the rich gold of the dying bracken. Sweetly the odors their horses' feet crush out of these two plants rise up and hang about them. Freshly the invigorating moor-land breeze fans their brows and kisses their cheeks, as they ride on rich in beauty, and youth, and happiness.

She tells him legends of the grand old tract over which they are passing, legends of local love and local war that have a bewitching reality to her because she has been born and brought up in the district, and has heard them from her babyhood. And whenever she touches on the old, old story, her voice and eyes deepen, and Phil wishes that he might so ride on ever.

Brunette is good across any country, and the gray follows Brunette's lead without giving his rider any trouble. Accordingly, they constantly jump the moor-land streams and strike off straight for any point of rising ground that seems to promise a fair, extended view. The fascination of the wildness of the moor gets into their veins, and they "ride on through sun and shade" regardless of where they are going, and of how they are to get back.

It does not come upon them suddenly that they are losing their way. They are conscious of it, and speak and laugh about it at intervals, for Madge feels sure that she will presently see some well-known landmark which will enable her to steer for the right path back to the Halsworthy side of the moor. But time goes on, and no such landmark appears. And the day begins to die.

The bright, happy breeze begins to change into a strong howling wind that seems to be coming from every quarter of the heavens at once. Happily there is no rain, but the wind bites; and when they take the level and gallop, which they do at brief intervals, Madge has to bend her head down low in order to avoid the cutting blast.

"We may be miles from Halsworthy, or we may be close on its borders, for all you know, I suppose," Phil says at last. He is getting keenly excited, and he can not define even to himself whether it is with pleasure or with pain.
"If we were anywhere near the Halsworthy border I should know it," Madge has to confess ruefully; "people ought to put up posts on the moor: I am so hungry!"

It is the plain of healthy, happy youth. They have been riding for many hours now, and the moor breeze is brisk and appetite-engendering. "If I had only brought my flask and some biscuits," she says. "What can we do?"

Literally, they know not where they are, nor where they are going, and the day goes on dying as quickly as possible. Madge is in the frame of mind to look out for omens and mappies. Phil never in his life prayed so heartily for the appearance of a third human being as he is praying now.

Presently another ill befalls them. The gray develops so scarcely amounts to a lameness, "but a decided dip" in the leg which he had stuck into the grass-grown hole in the morning; and in mercy to him their pace grows slower and slower.

Unexpectedly the character of the land alters—there is still light enough in the sky for them to see that hedges appear, and trees crop up. They are off the moor proper, but in what direction they have come off it neither of them can tell.

It is dusk now, as they strike into a wild road, and they can not see, though they hear cart-wheels approaching lumberingly. By this time the dip has become lameness of such a decided nature that Phil has been obliged to dismount and prowl along on foot. The light of stars is upon them as he accosts the carter with the words.

"Can you tell us the road to Halsworthy?"

He is sluggishly informed in the vernacular that the carter "Joan't know un."

Madge now endeavors to extract information, and begins at the beginning:

"Where are we?"

"Here," is the simply veracious answer.

"What is it called?"

The excellent man addressed has toiled since six o'clock in the morning on little else save beer of a heady kind. Never in his life before has he been put through such a catechism. He resents it now stolidly by saying,

"Taint called nothing but a roa-ad."

"Where does it lead to?" Phil interposes in despair.

"To where be gwain," is the reply; "if 'e be gwain to Garbeston, go forrad, and if 'e be gwain on the moor, go thicky way." Then he cries "way" to a horse that wants to go on, and "g'long" to a horse that wishes to stand still; and passes out of the view of the pair, who realize at last that they are lost in the wilds.

Slowly and rather sadly they plod on now until they come to a precipice, down which they stumble, it being the only road. It is getting late now, between seven and eight o'clock, and Madge is suffering from poignant pangs of remorse for her imprudence. "What must poor Aunt Lucy and Mrs. Henderson be feeling? what must they be thinking? what must they be suffering?"

A glimmering light at the bottom of the precipice relights the Torch of Hope in her bosom. That same torch is ignited so easily in youth. "It must be a village, and we shall be able to get a horse for you, or a fly or dog-cart to take us home," she says, enthusiastically; and Phil agrees with her, though he hasn't the faintest shadow of belief in any such good fortune as a fly, or dog-cart, or saddle-horse be-falling them.

The bottom of the precipice is reached, and they find themselves in a picturesque ravine between the ridges of some of the border hills of wild Exmoor. They hear the sound of a gurgling stream, and the wail of the mighty moor blast, and, better than all else, they hear the sound of the blacksmith's hammer! Human habitations are near them, and in that sense of nearness they find infinite relief.

Abruptly, without the warning of a single house, they come upon a slight, unsubstantial shelf of a place, before which a lantern and a sign are swinging. The lantern shows them that the sign is that of the "Hunter's Delight," a fine fat stag of Ten. And with a groan of relief, after the long strain of uncertainty, they pull up at the little shabby portal.

As they do so, a shabby small mail phaeton, drawn by a pair of champign, well-bred bay cobs, dashes up to the door, and with an impulse which she can't resist, and which has a marked influence on her future, Madge springs back, and vents her admiration of them aloud.

"Look! they're thorough-breds," she cries to Philip, who is engaged in ascertaining a few dreary facts, and as she says it and turns her beaming face toward the lighted passage (Madge always "beams" at the sight of a good horse), a weird old figure glides from an inner room.

A strange old figure, the sight of whom carries Madge back a hundred years into the realms of long, long dead-and-gone novels and plays. An old lady, of seventy at least, whose figure is concealed by a huge coachman's coat and capses, and whose face burrows under a half-high beast hat tied down with big lappets—a product of the past—a something indigenous to the soil of Exmoor, evidently—a plump florid landlord (he turns out to be the village baker as well as the village Boniface) backs with trepidation before this apparition. A landlady, whose efforts to retain her gentility in this barren region have rendered her sparse and bony and slightly snappish, regards the new-comers chillingly; but the lady with the big cloak and beaver hat greets them genially.

"Come in, my dears," she begins; "cold riding on the moors to-night, I should say; here's a fire;" and, as she speaks, she pushes back a shaving that represents a door, and gives them a view of a room that looks like a partition in a deal box, at one end of which a
bright peat-fire is burning. "Come in," she says, "and be warm and comfortable;" and they go in, and are warm and uncomfortable.

The quaint figure follows them, and by the light of a solitary dip candle, that is drearily guttering itself away in a draught, they see her as she is.

A slim, supple old woman—enveloped as she is, they can see that she is this—brisk in movement, energetic in action, keen and alert in expression. The face the half-high beaver shadow almost gleams with a queer half-comic, half-suspicious smile as she surveys the young pair before her.

"I heard you speak of my horses," she says presently to Madge, "and I'll tell you that I have twenty at home as handsome, and some of them handsomer than they; I'm the Lady of the Manor; now tell me who you are—or who your husband is?"

Madge has a light and ready explanation of the real state of the case on her lips, and she is about to offer it. But something checks the utterance of the ringing soprano tones, and that something is the intense expression of emotion which overspreads Phil's face as the old lady's mistake falls on his ear.

He understands himself and his feelings clearly enough now. Madge's husband! It is what he would give half his life to be. It is what he may never dare desire to be. Already he loves her with the love of a man who has never wasted his affection on every fair face that has come within his ken. Already he knows that she, and she only, represents all that he can ever love in woman or desire in a wife. Already he feels that he ought to leave Halsworthy the same hour that sees her safely home. Already he is wildly, madly, desperately sure that Madge understands some of this, and is not outraged by it.

They stand there silently, foolishly enough, illuminated by the one flaring dip, and keenly regarded by the gleaming gray eyes that sparkle out from under the half-high beaver hat. The expression which lights up Phil's face and betrays his feelings, has completely fascinated Madge. Pausing on the brink of the explanatory speech, she stands, with parted lips and rising color, looking at him—and not looking at him angrily. Before she can recover herself, before she can recall either Phil or herself to a sense of the allegiance due to the absent lover, the old lady comes to her aid.

"I beg your pardon, my dear lady; I've been a little premature, I see; he is not your husband yet." And here she pauses and nods her head, and informs Madge in a confidential undertone that she "had actually taken them for a pair of newly-married geese; but all the bloom is on the rose still, I see; marriage brushes it off quickly enough."

While she has been speaking, Madge has made a mighty effort to resume that sovereignty over herself which had been shaken just now.

"He is the cousin of the gentleman I am engaged to," she explains as firmly as she can; and then she hands her card to the old lady, and asks her if there is any possibility of their getting back to Moorbridge House to-night.

Speedily and decisively that hope is annihilated.

"There is no possibility; you are twenty-six miles from Winstaple, and Halsworthy is on the other side of Winstaple."

"And my brute of a horse is lame," Philip grumbles.

"And I'm tired out," Madge says, throwing herself down on a chair and beginning to cry; "still we can't stay here."

She looks appealingly at Phil, and there is infinite distress in her tone and in her eyes.

"I will do whatever you wish," he whispers, eagerly. "I'll walk by you, if you like to try and ride on to-night."

"Mrs. Henderson will be so distressed," poor Madge goes on whimpering; "she didn't wish us to come; and now that this has happened—oh dear! oh dear! I don't know what to do."

"I'll tell you, my dear," the strange lady has been listening to every word they have uttered, and scanning every look of theirs. And she knows all their story; ay! even more of it than they know themselves yet. She has been young herself.

"I'll tell you, my dear; you can't get home to-night, for there's no one to guide you, and no horse to carry your—friend; and you can't stay here, that's certain; but my house is only half a mile off, and if you'll be my guests for the night, I'll drive you home the first thing tomorrow morning; so just step into my phaeton, and make yourselves as happy as you can."

They hesitate, but only for a moment or two, for it is the only alternative they have. And so, rather dispiritedly, they—but still with a sort of exultation—(about which they feel half guilty) they follow Mrs. Graves to her carriage, and are driven up and down a rocky road, through wild, unkempt pleasure-grounds to the door of a long, low house, where they are deafened by the vociferous barking of at least a dozen dogs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOST AND FOUND.

Five days have passed since Olive the iniquitous has been expelled from the virtuous portals of Mrs. Tollington's house. Five long, dreary, disagreeable days spent by the poor, forlorn girl in wandering about trying to get employment.

Naturally she is in London. Where else can women workers hope to find immediate work. The great Mart is the only place she knows to which she can bring such wares as she has—ah! "how poor her wares are," she feels miserably;
"HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID."

"...and how plentifully supplied every one appears to be with them."

For five days she has toiled incessantly about the great labor market without avail. She has patiently waited her turn in at least twenty "Governesses Agency Offices," she has made two or three futile journeys into far-off suburbs at the call of ladies who "think she may suit," until they see her. And now she sits in her dusky bed-room in the boarding-house where she is staying, sick at heart, and sadly conscious that she must come down a rung of the social ladder if she wants to live.

The fees at the Agency Offices, and the inevitable omnibus fares, have terribly lightened the purse into which so very little money was put at starting; and her board and lodging is a heavy item, when compared with the slender resources on which she has to draw to pay for them. The boarding-house is kept by two ancient maiden ladies, and it is cheap, and not remarkably nice. But it is "highly respectable," and so poor Olive determines to stay there "while her money lasts," or until she gets employment.

How she hates her life as she sits here with feet that ache from having traversed acres of hard pavement this day—and traversed them in vain. Dejection of spirit has made her physically weak—as is always the case when the organization is fine. She is nearly in tears as she takes her place at the boarding-house tea-table, round which are seated eight or nine talkative, bustling women.

They all know that she is seeking employment as a governess or companion. They all know that up to the present date her search has been a vain one. They all know that she is out of heart—that she is poor—and that she revolts against these her surroundings. And yet God in His infinite mercy has made the larger section of humanity so gentle, that they pity and are kind to her according to their lights.

"Have we to congratulate you on better fortune to-day, Miss Aveland?" the senior sister chants, as she hands Olive a cup of tea. The senior sister is a good, kind creature, and whenever she has time to think about Olive, she does it that poor forlorn one "may soon meet with something good." Still the season has been a dull and empty one for the unprotected fair who are striving to live by means of the same they make for other women as unprotected, and poor, and anxious as themselves. And so while Olive's money lasts she is very w'orried here.

"No," we've answers, conscious that all eyes are upon us as the question is asked. "I'm getting weary of trying, even; people want so much in these days: if I had no conscience, and would only 'profess' to teach half a dozen things of which I know nothing, it would be all well; my employers would not find me out; but—I have a conscience, and so 'unsuited to the situation' is the verdict passed upon me wherever I have shown my face."

All the faces at the table turn toward her as she speaks. She is such a brilliant young creature that she gathers all the interest the anxious-hearted women about her have left for any thing in life but themselves. They admire a little, fear a little, condemn a little—but all like her.

"I suppose you wouldn't be any thing but a governess?" one of them suggests, deprecatingly; and Olive is aware that there is a hard, ungrateful ring in her voice as she answers,

"I'd be a cook if I had the skill, or a housemaid if I had the strength requisite; having neither, I can only be a governess."

"If you wouldn't scorn the occupation," the old lady goes on, "I happen (quite by chance, indeed,) to know of something that would be, perhaps, better in the long run than a governess's situation, though of course not so genteel—"

"Oh! don't say that," Olive interrupts; "tell me what it is; it would be vulgar to die of want—as I shall soon if I can't get work."

And then she remembers all she has lost for love, and would not regain it at the cost of the love she has known. Olive is a true woman!

With many a preamble, and many an apologetic, the scheme is propounded to her, and at the first hearing Olive shudders—shudders indignantly. It is this:

"With that lovely figure of yours, you would be invaluable in a show-room," the lady says, deprecatingly, "and I happen to know that they want a young lady in the mantle department at Barr and Battle's; most genteel young persons in the shop, I assure you; my own cousin is cashier there."

Poor Olive!

Little by little the possibility of doing what has been suggested to her filters through and permeates her mind. She must do something. And nothing else is to be done. Therefore, she goes up and offers herself to the awfully critical eye of "Barr and Battle," and her shoulders are seen to be the right shape for showing off a shawl, and her figure is discovered to be replete with all the grace requisite for the disposal of a polonaise! And so she takes her place in the show-room, and inwardly renounces all her past life and its associations. Poor Olive!

The rate of remuneration offered by Barr and Battle for the manner in which she will display their polonaises and shawls is magnificently, when compared with the meagre sum she could ever hope to obtain as a governess. She is not to live in the house, as do a large number of her fellow-workers. But altogether, she is to be very safe, and respectable, and well cared for in this lower sphere.

But after all, she does gird against the conditions of her life. She neither gives herself airs, poor, humbled, heart-sore creature, nor strives in any way to assume a superiority to her fellows which she does not feel conscious of. But she is not one of them! Her tradi-
tions are all of another life than theirs, and they intuitively feel that she is not of them though she is with them.

One day the mantle she is displaying to the best advantage for the benefit of a pair of badly-built young beings, who find every thing "ungraceful," falls prone on the floor in limp folds, and she stands trembling and aghast as Griffiths Poynter stumbles forward, full of surprise, in which there is both joy and pain, to greet her.

Her fellows regard her jealously. The two young beings, who find every thing ungraceful, regard her superciliously and suspiciously, for her beauty is as incontestable as is Griff's pleasure at seeing her again. And for the last few days they have been cultivating the feeling that Griff will eventually resign himself utterly unto them, his lawful cousins, until it has assumed the proportions of a fair flower of Hope. It is disappointing, irritating in the highest degree, to see it nearly uprooted in this way by "a young person in a shop."

They claim Griff's attention assiduously, they try to hurry him away, by pulling out watches he has given them, and avowing themselves "late for an appointment that they wouldn't miss for the world." But their efforts are proved futile. Griffiths's mind refuses to grasp any thing beyond the great fact that Olive is Madge's friend, and seems to be most miserable. Possibly he may be of use to her. Possibly he may be enabled to give Madge some comforting tidings of her friend when he goes back.

"I must not keep you from your friends," she says, in a low tone, as the cousin glances pierce her soul, and the idea enters in that one of them may be his bride elect; "Men, as a rule, only go shopping with the girls they are going to marry," she tells herself. There is nothing intrinsically beautiful about either of these girls; it can only be the sentiment that enables him to bear the sight of the awkward attempts they make at draping themselves gracefully.

Some of these feelings make themselves manifest in the indifferent glance which she lets fall on them. Some fine turn, of which she is herself unconscious, betrays itself in the half-averted head and lowered tones. They are very keen as to the maintenance of their dominion over Griff. They detect—and determine to denounce—all manner of subtlety in the demeanor of this "young person."

"You must give me your address, Miss Aveland," he says, handing out a note-book. "Madge will never forgive me when I go back, if I don't take a full report of you to her."

"She picks up the mantle she had dropped at the first sight of him, and with it she recovers her perfect self-possession.

"Take this report of me to Miss Roden," she says, coldly, "that I feel my old acquaintances can do me no greater kindness than to forget me."

"You'll let me call to see you?" he asks, in a state of flushed amazement. And Olive answers, definitely.

"No! my time belongs to Messrs. Barr and Battle. I have none to give to such idle follies as friendships and old associations.

He is heartily, unfeignedly, pathetically sorry. But she is "half sick of shadows," poor thing, and she thinks that all this earnestness of his may be a sham, and the sorrow a shadow. There is not sufficient sympathy between Griffiths and herself for her to hear the genuine ring of the metal in every word he speaks to her. And so she wishes to get rid of him! He is but a talkative interruption to her thoughts.

But even as she gives him a limp hand in farewell, even as she raises her languid eyes to give a last look at the fussy, unprepossessing young ladies who accompany him, an idea darts into her mind and permeates it. Supposing she marries this man? No one would be harmed, and it might make her forget Philip.

Quick as thought, all the worst of the woman comes to the fore, and causes her to change her tactics. He, seeing her relent, believes that sweetening, chastening thoughts of Madge are leavening her harshness of a minute ago, and he feels inclined to adore that absent influence.

His cousins seeing the change, crack the nut of truth, and extract the kernel as they whisper jealously to each other.

"She means mischief."

What she meant to do, and how she meant to do it, may not be told just yet. All that need be mentioned at this juncture is that she called Griffiths's note-book into requisition at last, and therein wrote down her address, and an hour when she could receive him.

As in a dream, she goes on displaying articles of apparel to women far less fair than herself during the remainder of that day. As in a dream, she hears anxious badinage from the many who were not fortunate enough to excite the admiration of Mr. Poynter, and the spleen of his cousins. As in a dream, she lays a train that will scorch her sadly when it explodes.

Phil Fletcher has roughed it considerably during his journey through this world. He has seen a goodly portion of the darker side of life, and he has no "kid gloves," "perfumed curl," and "lascivious look," propensities. He has never gone in for the character of "curled darling," or fastidious man of fancyed habits. Yet he stares aghast when he finds himself with Madge by his side, well inside Mr. Graves's portals.

They have effected an entrance through a spacious conservatory, wherein there is not so much as a leaf, far less a flower, to break the monotonous glare of glass. It looks like a tank, and smells like a charnel vault, and Madge shivers as she passes through, and thinks more regretfully than ever of Mrs. Hen-
derson’s face of patient protest against the ride which has ended in this. She shivers in a more pronounced manner presently when the house door of the conservatory is opened by a dwarfed female servant whose face is cut across from the right temple to the left point of the jaw by a deep red wound that looks stiff, and sore, and altogether revolting.

She admits them into a big musty hall hung round with coarse sporting pictures of fifty years ago; with otter heads, and foxes’ tails, and the antlers of the red deer. The odor of the vault, of a dead and rapidly decaying respectability, is over all these things.

The sound of a dozen tongues raised in anger, in mirth, in revelry, in savagery, reeks in from the back regions. The handmaidens with the gash across her face, and a candle held at the best angle for guttering, stands and stares at the unwonted apparition of two handsome, clean, intelligent-looking human beings. Six of the dogs have effected an entrance, and are yapping and howling over a big loaf of bread which they have dragged from some recess. Six more are howling their protest outside, against their unjust exclusion. Slightly in the background the mistress of the mansion stands, keenly observant of the effect of all this on her unexpected guests.

"Welcome to my house," she breaks into the midst of their amazed meditation with a suddenness that makes them both start. "Dorcas" (this to the girl who had admitted them), "call Mr. Graves; tell your master I want him.

The girl shambles away on her mission, and Mrs. Graves leads the way into an apartment from which apparently fresh air has been excluded for the last century. There is in it an odor of apples, of tobacco-smoke, of stale beer, of poultry, of musty books. As the feeble light falls on surrounding objects, Madge sees masses of rare old china piled up, together with common modern crockery, on a sideboard, above which hangs a superb Canaletti, and an indisputable Sir Joshua, together with some penny-colored prints and appalling photographs. "It is the end of the world, and we have tumbled into chaos," she whispers, as her hostess goes out of the room, and the young pair involuntarily draw nearer to one another.

"It is but an episode that we shall laugh over heartily with Philip," Phil says, re-assuringly, as he takes observant note of a new-born look of fear in Madge’s eyes. But though he says this with the greatest sangfroid he has at command, he knows within himself that it is an episode which will set its mark on the after-lives of both Madge and himself.

He knows that, do what he will, struggle as he will (and, poor fellow, he begins sadly to distrust his own strength and capacity for struggling now), an amount of intimacy will be developed between them which can never be forgotten, never obliterated, never remedied. When she turns to him with those beseeching eyes, full of half-pitiful, half-quaintly humorous appeal, what can he do but give her all the quick sympathetic companionship she mutely pleads for.

Even now they stand nearer together, just for a moment, while Mrs. Graves goes out on some domestic mission connected with their sudden appearance. And as she inclines toward him, she forgets all stiff and conventional forms of address, and says, "Oh! Phil, isn’t this funny?"

"It’s too delicious," he answers, earnestly, not thinking a bit of Mrs. Graves, or of Mrs. Graves’s chaotic establishment, but thinking solely and wholly of the bright young creature by his side who at this juncture is depending on him very visibly.

"Delicious while we’re together," she says, in that foolishly vehement way of hers that makes itself manifest whenever she is gratified or excited, "but it will be awfully dull to me when I can’t look at you, and see that you see the fun of it no longer. I shall have time to gloom then about what they must be thinking at home."

The corners of her mouth drop pitifully here, for Madge is very tired. The breezes that blow off the moor are very health-giving, doubtless, but they are very prostrating in their immediate effects. Never in her life before has Madge longed so for a human shoulder on which to rest her weary young head. Unfortunately Philip’s is the only shoulder near, and he is the "wrong Philip."

By-and-by a small strawberry-colored man shambles in, covered with grisy clothes that hang upon him as if he were an ill-made peg. He is closely followed by Mrs. Graves, who saves them from falling into the error of taking him for a tipsy groom, by presenting him to them in the character of—

"My husband—Mr. Graves."

There is a lamentable want of purpose about Mr. Graves’s words, and hands, and deportment generally. He experiences the most frightful difficulties with his knees and consonants. The first bend out helplessly, and have to be spasmodically straightened, and the second won’t fall trippingly off his tongue. He is the first specimen of this kind of thing that Madge has seen, and she recoils from him, and gets nearer to Philip.

Nearer in seeming, and oh! how much nearer in reality, as he makes each movement that portrays trust and dependence upon him. Nearer to him, nearer to his heart every instant. And he dares not take her in and welcome her, because his cousin has won this blessing with a lie.

But when she puts her soft, clinging hand round his arm, and gives it a frightened clasp and says, "Oh! don’t you wish we had never come?—don’t you wish we had staid at home?"

When she says this, he is a fool, and in his folly he forgets many things he would do well to remember, and says,
"No, darling, no; for we shall meet again tomorrow." And Madge (failing Madge) forgets to rebuke him for calling her "darling."

Will she dream this night of the arrival of the lover for whose advent she has been waiting all her life? Will she welcome the real Happy Prince, and—find him not the Philip who came to Halsworthy first?

When morning dawns, will the thought in her mind, the thought that will make her spring to meet the new day, be this—that her fellow-traveler of the day before is waiting below to greet her—waiting below, as eagerly expectant of that greeting as she is? A fellow-sinner! A fellow-sufferer! (will she thrill, and hate herself), the lover of her life.

No; none of these thoughts and emotions will be hers for many a long day to come. But the presentiment that they are destined to overcome her finally is upon the loyal, loving girl, with painful power.

CHAPTER XIX.

BIRD OR DEVIL!

"I love thee so dear, that I only can have thee."

Preceded by the girl with a gash across her face, Madge, after those parting words of folly with Philip, goes to her chamber, and its influences are not soothing or cheering.

It is a spacious apartment; one candle is utterly insufficient to light up its dim recesses, so all that Madge sees at first is a desert of much-worn Persian carpet, and an oasis of bed in the middle of the same; the bed is a ponderous four-poster, the curtains of so dark a green that they look black by this faint light, hang from the posts like shrouds. At the head of the bed is a plume of feathers. "Bah! it looks like a hearse," she says, with a shudder of repulsion.

Dorcas puts the candle down, stamps to the door, and gets herself away without uttering a word. As the echo of her footsteps dies away in the corridor outside, poor Madge's heart stands still, and then thumps audibly with uncontrollable fear. Supposing any thing (she does not attempt to define a possible object of dread) should come out of one of those dark distances and frighten her, where should she flee, and on whom should she call? and, oh, how awful this loneliness is to her!

In ordinary circumstances, and under ordinary conditions, Madge Boden is the reverse of a coward. But her courage fails her now, for circumstances have conspired to unnerve her cruelly to-day. She is so shaken by the events of the day, she is so startled at finding what a prominent place Phil has taken up in her mind, that all her self-control is forsaking her.

It is a dreadful room; she speaks a few reassuring words to herself once, and they seem to roll about and echo all around her. The walls are dark, and several even darker por-

traits hang upon them. These are powerfully painted pictures; they seem to move as poor modern Madge does, and their eyes look into hers wherever she turns, and appear to gleam with sardonic intelligence.

On reviewing her progress up stairs to bed, it seems to her now that she walked through miles of corridors, past uninhabited rooms; she knows that, whatever happened, Phil would not hear her, even if she yelled all her horrors aloud. As this dark view of her desolation presents itself before her, she distinctly hears a soft rustle somewhere behind her, between herself and one of the paneled walls. And in a passion of terror, such as only highly organized and intensely sensitive people experience, she retreats into a corner of the room, and scans all she can of the rest of it with widely-distributed eyes.

It is in vain that she tells herself that this is idle folly, foolish fear, contemptible weakness! The dread has overmastered her to such a degree that she is sure some ghostly fright will be given her before the blessed daylight creeps in andousts these gruesome shadows. Like a child, she longs to get into bed and bury her head under the clothes, but she can not muster up courage to cross that wide expanse between her corner and that haven of refuge, the bed. The candle is short and spare, and burns rapidly away; there are only three or four inches between herself and utter darkness. She watches it with fascinated eyes, and with a choking dread of its abruptly going out with a sputter before she can make up her mind to take the leap across to what seems like a sanctuary by comparison with her present position.

Her faculties of hearing and seeing intensify themselves; she peers into the shadows opposite, and it seems to her that the portraits on the wall are fluttering their preposteros wigs, and affectedly flinging their fans; she is sure that their eyes are dilating, and their bosoms heaving, and oh! one of them heaved a sigh!

Madge, blind with terror, now takes a spring that carries her to the side of the bed, and there stumbles and falls short of reaching it, for it is higher than she has been accustomed to. Still the habits of courtesy, the habits of concealing feelings, the exhibition of which would give pain to others, the custom of her caste, in short, is upon her strongly. And in this extreme moment she does violence to her inclinations, and represses the yell of horror which wells up from her heart, and which her lips decorously decline to utter.

How shall she ever endure it? how shall she ever live through it until the blessed light comes and relieves her of the agony of uncertain outlines, and dim distances full of pictured forms that move, and eyes that dilate? Even as she half unconsciously questions thus of herself, something palpitates behind her, and the light goes out with a sputter.

In an instant flash through her mind recollections so vivid, that they seem to be painted
in bright colors of all the scenes of luring travelers to their own destruction which she has ever heard or read of. The palpitation behind her is no creation of her disordered mind. It is a reality, a genuine sound! She can not reason it away, for it is growing, advancing upon her. This something intangible, which is at the same time real, crushes the blood out of her heart, and renders her half senseless.

Frozen with horror, petrified by a fear that she can not define, or something she can not analyze, the girl on whom so many fair, high hopes are set lies there alone until the morning. When the morning comes, when the "blessed light," for which she has so wildly yearned and prayed appears, she can not take comfort from it; for the fever of her spirit has mounted to her brain, and Madge Roden is very ill, so ill that Dorcas wandering in, after much prompting, with a jug of hot water, finds it a task beyond her capacity altogether to make the "young lady know what's what."

Other and altogether new elements of confusion are introduced into that household forthwith. Poor, feverish, wandering Madge is placed on the bed she had so vainly essayed to gain, and the dogs are turned out into a distant yard, and the doctor is sent for, and the owl is driven from the gloomy corner of the room from whence he had watched and fluttered at Madge the previous night. And when all these steps toward her present comfort and future restoration have been taken, it occurs to Mrs. Graves that "the gentleman ought to be told."

The gentleman in question is still sleeping the sleep of a sojourner serving his novitiate on the moor, while the doctor stoops over Madge and utters the ominous words "brain fever, brought on by cold and some shock to her nervous system." And it is this verdict on the state of his already idolized Madge that falls, with almost stunning force, on Philip's ears when he eventually descends to what resembles "the lower regions" in more senses than one.

At this juncture—out of the chaos of this realm of riot—the key-note of the proper mode of action is struck by an unexpected hand. The dead old mistress of this mansion of misrule comes forward with a perfect conception of the exigencies of the situation that stagers Phil for one minute, and compels his unwilling admiration the next.

"The young lady who is engaged to your cousin will be quite safe in my house, Mr. Fletcher, without any remote guardianship from you," she says, incisively; "but the sooner her other friends are with her the better; so I should advise your taking the fastest horse in my stable (the screw you rode yesterday is hopelessly lame), and going yourself with these poor tidings to her home without delay. The news will come more softly from you than from a groom."

In common sense, in common honor, in common decency, Philip has no appeal against this decision, though he would give all such fortune as Fate may ever bestow upon him to be suffered to lie down like a watch-dog at her door. But he has no appeal; he knows that he would be worse than a fool to protest against this really right dictum which has been uttered from such an unlooked-for quarter. And according he goes as Mrs. Graves bids him, and Madge remains in the house of a stranger, monominous unconscious, quite alone.

The bracing air of wild free Exmoor has no power this day to brace the nerves of the messenger of woe, who "rides as though he were flying" in very truth, quite regardless of the broken nature of the ground, and the possibility of Mrs. Graves's bonniest blood—lame laming herself for life over it. He knows that he has been bitterly to blame in letting Madge lose herself, and he knows nothing of the innocent cause of Madge's final overthrow. Owls are constant visitors in the darker corners of the manor-house, and the servant who drove out the special one that fluttered like a thing of evil from the dim distance at Madge has never thought of mentioning such a common occurrence as its appearance and ejection.

As he gallops, by-and-by, through the long, narrow street of Halsworthy, emotions crowd in quickly upon him, and he begins to dread the look of stern displeasure which will glook over Mrs. Henderson's face, and the agitation and tearfulness which Aunt Lucy will bring to bear upon him when they hear his story.

The paramount thought in his mind as he rides up the avenue at Moorbridge is, "It will be aiding her frail hand to the heart's suicide with a vengeance, if I let her marry Philip."

But this thought, with all its saving strength, deserts him suddenly, when, in answer to his impatient ring at the hall-door bell, a bewildered-looking servant opens the door, and Philip, his cousin, stands out cleanly, tall, and fair, and handsome, and with an immense air of having a well-established right in all things behind that servant's head.

Philip, the messenger of ill tidings, and Philip, the accepted lover, make all things clear (after the manner of men) in a few moments; but Madge's cavalier of the previous day has a tight time of it presently when he is brought to bay before the women, to whom Madge, and every thing concerning Madge, is dearer than life.

He gets no pity from Aunt Lucy, he gets no help from Mrs. Henderson; the former is weeping incapable of considering aught but Madge's danger, Madge's suffering; the latter is sternly disinclined to salve a conscience that, from the bottom of her honest heart, she believes ought to be seared about Madge.

And through it all he knows himself to be so guiltless in act and word. As for his thoughts! Heaven help him! Could he help them? They have never been given utterance
to, they have never wronged her—save in that one weak moment when, out of his great love for her, and pity for her solitariness, he called her "darling."

The arrangements that are made at once are all made with a propriety, a perfection that proves to Phil "the late," as he may be called, that he is unneeded, unwelcome. He has a wretched sensation of being scouted by Aunt Lucy, and suspected by Mrs. Henderson, and simply "suffered" by his cousin Philip. And so he does his duty in a very aggrieved and outraged state of mind, after all, and declares himself "ready to go back to town" directly Mrs. Henderson declares herself determined to go and nurse her favorite.

Philip the lover, Philip the prosperous and preferred, is, in the order of natural selection, "told off" for escort duty to the two ladies who are going over to aid and succor Madge. But before this dominant duty claims him, he has half an hour with his cousin.

When that half-hour commences, each man means so honestly "to have it out" with each other, but somehow each falls short of his meaning, and so the flame of truthful explanation wavers, flickers, fades away.

"I have never apologized to you for having used your sword and cocked hat, as it were, when I came a-wooing," Philip the lover begins, somewhat meanly; for it is mean to remind a generous foeman of his former generosity when a fresh conflict is beginning.

"The only thing you could flitch from me was my good name," Phil the lad says, laughing with an effort; "and as we share it together—"

"Blow the name, it's been the temptation!" Philip responds, savagely; "Phil! you've seen the girl—isn't she glorious?"

"Glorious!" the other replies briefly.

"And this place isn't to be despised?" Philip goes on interrogatively, with the airy manner of a man who, never having possessed one square inch of his own, can gayly condescend to the indifferent contemplation of acres.

Phil is silent, surly so; to him there is something brutal, coarse, unmanly in this talk of the "place," when the possessor of it is so ill, "may be dying, for all we know," Phil thinks, in a burst of impotent love and fear.

"And yet," Philip goes on in a burst of self-satisfactory feeling, "with all this in my hand, as I may say, it proves me not an utterly selfish fellow, Phil. I'd give it all for a girl who has nothing in the world but her beauty and her love for me—"

"Then why haven't you given it all for her?" Phil interrupts.

"Because—well, a fellow can't make all the 'reasons why' cantor up into position at a moment's notice," Philip replies. "When I came down here for a lark (you know how awfully fond I always was of amateur dramatics), I didn't know what it would lead to; it has led to this! can you wonder at it?"

He asked this with an air of self-conceit that renders him insufferable to Phil. Briefly the latter says,

"When did you come down?"

"Yesterday, about four o'clock. I was disgusted, naturally; at finding Madge had gone out; and when she staid away all night I was more disgusted than ever. You ought to have been more prudent, Phil."

"I know it."

"Indeed, if it had been any other man than yourself," Philip goes on, "I shouldn't have accepted the situation in the quiet way I have now; as it is, I don't blame the girl nor you so much as I do those two fools of women who encourage Madge in all her silly escapades."

"Mrs. Henderson is incapable of encouraging any thing silly," Phil says, savagely. In spite of the stern glances which Mrs. Henderson has been bestowing upon him with liberality this day, he will be just to her. She is incapable of encouraging folly in any form. She will not even smile upon a form of folly to which, in his heart of hearts, he does seriously incline—namely, that he should win the girl he loves from a man who loves her not.

Mrs. Henderson is one of the women who are prompt in action. She never hesitates, never vacillates, never gets fussy or bewildered in any sudden emergency. So now she comes back from the Vicarage, having set her house in order, and organized the system of management of it during her absence, long before agitated Aunt Lucy is ready to start.

"While I am waiting for Miss Roden, I want to have a talk with you, Phil," she says to the man who has proved himself such an inefficient escort and protector to Madge.

They are alone in the library as she says this (for Philip the lover has gone to get his new traveling-bag, with its beautiful assortment of bottles and brushes, ready), and Phil feels uncommonly like a culprit as he approaches his mother's friend.

She is a dear, kind, good woman, and she gentles very much in expression as the young fellow comes close to her, and waits his doom with miserable eyes.

She bends forward and rests her hands on his shoulders and kisses him on the forehead, and at that he breaks down, and, with his face in his hands, he says,

"I'll go to-day."

"I knew you would; I was sure of you, Phil, my boy. I wish none of this had happened; but as it has, you must be strong and true; you must right the wrong I have helped to do; you must not run into temptation, nor lead her into it."

"I'll go to-day," he repeats. And then she sits down and holds his hand as lovingly as his mother might, and asks,

"Tell me all there is to tell."

"There is nothing but this—I love her, and Philip does not!"

Mrs. Henderson winces as if a blow had been dealt to her.
"Don't say that, don't think that, Phil: he may not love her with the love a girl like Madge ought to inspire; but with his best, surely?"

"Philip loves another woman with his best love, of whatever quality it may be," Phil says, with quickly repented-of angry candor. "But I know what you mean, two wrongs never made a right. Madge shall never know how I loved her, or how little it would cost him to renounce her."

For a minute Mrs. Henderson weighs the possibilities in the balance, and then she speaks.

"I know Madge—I know something about her that you have never thought of, and can not realize. From her babyhood she has never broken her part of an engagement, however trifling it may be; she has pledged herself to Philip, and she will redeem her pledge, even if she finds out that he does not give her the full share of love she bargained for. Madge is honorable in the way men ought to be; she can't break her word."

There is unbroken silence between them for a few moments; then she speaks again,

"I tell you fairly, that I shall never speak of you to her, never suffer her to think that you regard her as other than the most superficial acquaintance; she is very pure, and very proud—she will soon compel herself to forget you."

He smiles sadly. "And that is the thought you give me at parting to comfort me."

"Go and work, boy," she says, impatiently; "go and work, and forget her. Because I have been foolish in smoothing the way to this engagement of Madge's, I shall stand by and see a greater folly committed; and—don't hate me, Phil, for my blunder! Be a man!"

He is quite master of himself as he takes leave of the relief-party that is going off to Madge presently—quite master of himself, as in well-chosen language he expresses his earnest hopes that "Miss Roden will shortly be restored to perfect health"—quite master of himself as he shakes his cousin's hand in farewell, and says, "You must keep my mother and sisters au courant with your proceedings, Philip; give them time to prepare the wedding presents, and make my peace with Miss Roden for my stupidity of yesterday."

But he knows that this mastery will not last.

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CHAPTER XX.

AS GOLD IS TRIED BY FIRE.

Coming home one evening from the great emporium where she acts as block for the better display of the millinery triumphs of "Barr and Battle," to her lodgings hard by, Olive Aveland meets Philip Fletcher face to face.

It is the day before he goes down to Moorbridge House, and he has just been making thousands of good resolutions, each one of which he is ready to break at sight of the girl whose life he has laid waste.

At sight of him, Olive gasps a silent, heartfelt prayer for strength, and it is given to her. There is no flush on her face, no flutter in her voice, as she says, in answer to his eager,

"Olive! I have been mad to know where you were."

"There can be no pretense of friendship between us. No; I would rather not shake hands with you." And, as she says this, she walks on steadily, easily, and he stands and looks after her.

Presently he overtakes her again, and now there is anger in Olive's eyes as she regards him.

"I shall be wretched all my life," he begins, "if you cut me in this way. Have pity on me, Olive! you know how I love you—how I suffer in renouncing you; give me your friendship still."

"You traitor to Madge!" she cries in a low voice, but with an amount of concentrated passion in it that portends a perilous time for any one who may encounter her in this mood, and run contrary to it; "you traitor to Madge—after I'd forgiven you about myself too," she adds, with a sudden breaking down of all her bulwarks, that is intensely weak and womanly.

Philip Fletcher likes to stand well with people—even with people whom he has injured. It is soothing to his own sense of satisfaction with himself always, in looking back upon past events, to remember that, whatever they knew about him, they could but seem to like him while they were with him! He values this personal power, which is his distinguishing attribute, highly; cherishes it, and appreciates it as the good friend it has been to him deserves to be cherished and appreciated. By its aid he has already tided over many a time of trial. The men of whom he has borrowed money, on account of it forgive him for forgetting to pay it. The women to whom he has pledged light love-vows, which he has never attempted to redeem, forgive him for perjuring himself when he comes before them blithe and debonair. It hurts him, after all that is past, that Olive should be in any other passion than one of love for him.

"You are Madge's dearest friend, and there is no treachery to her in trying to keep your friendship for myself," he pleads eagerly and earnestly. "I am going down to her to-morrow; let me tell her that I met you to-night, and that you sent a loving message to her."

The girl is young, and full of tender-heartedness and good feeling and gratitude to Madge for all the kindness shown a while ago, when she (Olive) needed it almost as much as she does now.

"You may say what you like that's loving to Madge," she whimpers out; "and oh! Philip, do you be good to her always; do love her."

Something in the appeal goes to the very core of his heart, and selfish Philip forgets himself a moment.

"Good-bye, Olive; God bless you!" he mut-
ters, taking off his hat in a spasm of deep respect; "think of me kindly now, for Madge's sake."

So he walks on, and leaves her out in the turmoil of the street alone. And she can't help contrasting this present carelessness of his with the chivalrous devotion of other days, when she was a rich man's reputed heiress, and Philip would have deemed himself wanting in every gentlemanly attribute if he had allowed her to walk over one yard of the pavement of Oxford Street in the glare of day unattended.

She feels very strangely softened and humbled, poor child, when she reaches the door of her lodgings. And at the door she meets Griffiths Poynter.

Griffiths Poynter, with an elderly lady leaning on his arm, and his card-case in his hand, calling on her properly—sparing her, soothing her, saving her in every social way. And she contrasts that other one with him, and in a glow finds that other one wanting. And her fidelity to a sham yields, and her faith in her own fool-hardy adherence to a falling cause yields; and her womanly willfulness in clinging to what crumbles under her touch yields; and she is almost as ready in this hour to receive Griffiths Poynter as a lover as she is to receive his aunt as her friend.

The aunt, untroubled by the presence of her daughter, is kindliness and cordiality itself to the young lady of whom her nephew has discreetly made mention as Miss Roden's favorite friend. For Miss Roden is a local power in the region in which this kindly-disposed old lady hopes to see one of her daughters reigning as Griffiths's wife.

Moreover, in addition to this indisputable fact that she is acting from interested motives, Gri's aunt is kindly-hearted, and there is a forlornness about the state of this young, reduced gentlewoman which is very grievous to her. It does not occur to her unschewing, unsophisticated mind that Olive Aveland, the young person who exhibits "Barr and Battle's" jackets and mantles to the best of her ability and shoulders, will ever vault to such heights of daring, even in imagination, as to dream of being Griffiths's wife. Up to the present moment she has not been under the influence of her daughters on the subject. She has refrained from saying any thing to them about this "unlucky young lady," because Grif has requested her to do so, and it has always been a habit of hers to attend to Grif's requests, partly because she really loves him very much, and partly because it is expedient.

"Miss Aveland, it's the first time I ever went into a show-room for ladies' things in my life, and to think it should have brought me the luck of meeting you again."

He says a portion of this speech with the rapidity of utterance that is the result of his earnest desire to express his pleasure in seeing her again, and the other portion of it in the disjointed tones which are the result of a rather hurried ascent of a more than rather steep flight of stairs. They are in Olive's small sitting-room by this time, and he knows his aunt is thinking how small it is, and how meagre its arrangements are. And he grieves from the bottom of his honest heart for the necessity, whatever it may be, which has brought one who ought to be in an atmosphere of perpetual "sweetness and light" down to such a drear and dingy one as this.

In that small, dull, confined space these three sit for ten minutes, and make very little headway toward gaining a fuller knowledge of each other. Then Olive, who has a hatred of standing in a false light under any circumstances, says,

"Do you think it a very terrible descent from educational serfdom to being a shop-girl, Mr. Poynter? I can see you're full of pity for me about something."

"As full of pity for you as I should be for a sister of my own," he answers promptly. Then, while Olive is looking him steadily in the face, in the endeavor to detect any sign of false shame in this pity, his well-meaning aunt interposes with one of those excellently-intentioned remarks that are very roots of bitterness to those to whom they are addressed.

"I have no doubt, Miss Aveland, but that my nephew could find you some more genteel employment—something far more congenial to you—among his own friends; housekeeper to a widower and governess to his children, or something of that sort."

"I certainly couldn't recommend any thing of that sort to Miss Aveland," Griff replies, hurriedly; "and I'm quite sure she wouldn't attend to me if I did recommend it." And his face tinges with a sensation of annoyance that is a new thing to him as he feels that his aunt is "probably thinking how good the odds in favor of matrimony with the widower would be in such a case," and shily fears that Olive may suspect his aunt of the same imaginative iniquity.

But Olive's thoughts are far otherwise employed. The impulse of hospitality is strong upon the girl, and she has not the wherewithal to obey it. She quite understands that a well-arranged dinner awaits these people at the lady's home, and still she does long to offer them the best she has, to show them to the best of her ability that they are as welcome to her as if she could receive them properly.

The practical need of exerting herself if she is really to do any thing at all in the way of obeying her instinct, drives all the romance of that last meeting with the Philip who had been hers and is Madge's out of her mind. She is nervous, but nervous only with household care, as she presently petitions them, in a voice that proves she means it, to "stay and have some tea with her."

Griff is delighted. He would gladly stay and have a cup of hot water and a grain of salt, so long as the partaking of it procured him her
presence. And his aunt accepts the invitation with a beneficence and winning condescension that is quite lost upon the young people, the one of whom busily employs herself in preparing the refreshment she had proffered, while the other busies himself equally in watching her evolutions.

There is something poetical about that tea-making, practical Griffiths thinks. The girl has got her lodgings in the house of an old countrywoman who had been cook for many years in a great county family. And during her sojourn among them she had been given many a quaint old piece of china, and many a maimed and mutilated piece of silver. By these the young lady on her first-floor benefited now. Therefore there was nothing incongruous between the girl and the articles with which she served her guests.

As she lights the gas at length, and the full light streams down on her head, he sees twisted into the crown of lustrous hair a ribbon of the rich amber hue she had been dressed in the first time he saw her. A similar ribbon encircles her neck, for though black silk dresses are the rule of Barr and Battles's establishment, Olive clings to her favorite color, and wears it where she may.

He remembers how Madge had told him that the "Amber Witch" was a pet phrase whereby she and some other intimate friends were wont to designate Olive. Remembering this, he worries himself by wondering who the other intimate friends were, and hopes heartily that there was no man among them. And so gradually gets silent and sad, and suffers his tan to get cold, and the spirit of the meeting to fail and die away.

"We must be very late, my dear Grif, and I'm sure Miss Aveland must be quite tired of us," his aunt says, vainly trying to suppress her fourth yawn, and inwardly rather aggrieved by the fact that Olive should seem to be sympathetic to Grif's silence and sadness, to the degree of indulging the same herself.

"Late—it can't be late!" Grif says, rising up, nevertheless. Then he looks at his aunt so inquiringly that that lady is utterly bewildered by her mental efforts to try and make out what Grif can possibly mean.

"We have had a most delightful evening," she stammers out to Olive; "so quiet and friendly, you know."

"And, though it's rather late for a call, you must please to take it for one," Grif hurriedly interposes. "My aunt's address is—(by-the-way, have you a card with you? that's the safest way)." And again Grif looks appealingly at his aunt.

"No, I haven't a card," she replies, stringing her soul up to the awful thought of hurting Grif, reminding herself of her daughter's wrath should a shop-girl dare to come and call on them. Why don't Grif think of this? Why will he put her in such a cleft stick? Why, when he knew how very fastidious his cousins were, should he make her run counter to that fastidiousness, and then disarrange her plans for keeping her conduct secret.

All these thoughts pass through her mind as she stands trying to get her cloak adjusted, and trembling so that she can not button it. As she is really a good and kind-hearted woman, she would go considerably out of her way to do good in any degree to this desolate girl whom she can see is a gentlewoman. She would willingly go out of her own way, but she dare not go into the way of her daughters.

Griffiths all the time thinks this reticence is simply amiable obtuseness on the part of his aunt. Therefore, though he would much rather that that lady's name and address should be courteously handed by herself to Olive, he waives that point, writes it down, and, as he gives it to Miss Aveland, says,

"You have started an at-home day, haven't you, aunt? Bedford Street is too far for Miss Aveland to go and find you out."

Before Mrs. Wainwright can answer Olive has understood the situation, accepted it, and resolved to escape from it in a way that shall not embarrass the poor bewildered lady, whose eyes have beamed kindness only upon her (Olive).

"It is impossible that I can come," she says, very gently, "though it is just as kind of you to wish it; but I am tied tightly down to my work all day, and when I leave it I want rest." She says it so unsuspiciously, she gives her hand so cordially to Mrs. Wainwright, that she has no idea that the fears, which even she admits to be unworthy, have been detected and assuaged by Olive, who, having performed her part with the lady, turns to close the scene with Griffiths.

"I shall not see you again probably, Mr. Poynter, so I will give you a message for Madge now. Tell her where I am, and that I am well, and that I hope all the rest of her life will be happier even than her bright past, and give her my dearest love."

"I'll do all that," he says, with some emotion; "but you must not cut me off like this; if you have no time to go out by day, and no inclination to go out in the evening, my cousins are not situated so; they'll come with me to see you and have tea like we have to-night; do let us. Won't they, aunt?"

Emaciated as she has been for some time past by misery, by suspense, by injustice and insult, Olive wakes at this into something of her old self, and laughs, actually laughs cheerfully.

"Good-night," she says, as Mrs. Wainwright, speechless from the moment of her nephew's last observation, slides out of the room. "Good-night; never make plans for other people; it's interfering with the liberty of the subject, and I don't approve of that."

"But I may see you again?"

"No," she says, impatiently. "I am peculiarly situated, and—but I needn't explain; good-bye."
"I may write?" he pleads.
She hesitates, then says,
"Write to me when Madge marries."
He has to content with this concession,
for his aunt is crying aloud from midway down
the stairs, that "it is quite dangerous to leave
a place like this without a light." So with
rather an effusive "I will," he goes, and Olive
is alone again.

Alone again, with better, truer thoughts in
her mind than filled it before these people
came. In their acknowledgment of her, in
their trust in her, in the friendship he had dis-
played so ardently, and that which his aunt had
displayed to the limited extent of her own dar-
ing, Olive derived comfort and found balm for
her poor, bruised spirit.

"He's worlds too good—he's too much of a
man for any woman to make a vengeance dum-
my of him," she thinks, as she takes dozens of
Philip's letters from a corner of her desk, and
proceeds resolutely to tear each sheet in four
pieces before putting them into the fire, "I
hope he will never tempt me to marry him;
and if he does, I pray that I may have the
courage to tell him about Philip."

With a calmer spirit than has been her por-
tion since the date of her ignominious dismiss-
al from Mrs. Wilmot's house, with a freer heart
than has rested in her bosom since Philip turn-
ed traitor, with a feeling of having a portion at
least of her womanly dignity restored to her,
Olive goes to bed this night.

And as she quietly sleeps, with every re-
vengeful thought exorcised, every unworthy
ambition cast away, Griffiths Poynter is em-
ployed upon the composition of a letter which
he means to post the instant he has finished it,
in which he urges her, by every consideration
that love can conjure up, to be his wife.

CHAPTER XXI.

"AT LAST!"

Madge, turning her head round on the pil-
low, with the sensations of one who wakes from
a dreamless sleep that has been too deep to be
refreshing, catches sight of a brightly burning
fire, and rises on her elbow at once in her as-
tonishment at a phenomenon which had not
been there when last she went to bed in Moor-
bridge House.

The attitude (which by a vast effort she sus-
tains for about half a minute) affords her a
sight of more wonders that are strange to her.
Somebody's ancestors are gazing at her from
various panels. All the furniture of the room,
which has been grand, is now only gloomy,
and large snow-flakes are floating airily past
the window.

She has no recollection whatever of the last
ride she rode, and the last roof that sheltered
her in these earlier moments of her restoration
to reason and convalescence. All her dangers,
all her anxieties, all her follies are blotted from
her mind, which is like a sheet of white paper
ready to receive the faintest impression that
may be made upon it. The first impressions
that are made have been described—they are
tangible. The second is a dreamy doubt as to
whether she is in a lunatic asylum or not.
The third is that somebody she knows—two
somebodies she knows are coming toward her
as she falls back, feeling hollow and very liable
to crack and crumble away, upon the pillow.

As these two somebodies come nearer, and
even lean over the bed, stronger recollections
come trooping into the mind that has been ly-
fing fallow for so long a time, and "fond mem-
ory" recalls to her the fact that she frivolously
opposed herself to the gentle judgment of one
of these watchers, on the occasion of her being
last awake. A twinge of conscience renders
her an easy prey to weakness again, and she
has no strength to put her hand responsively
into that loving one of Mrs. Henderson's which
is placed on her wrist.

"Gone off again?" Aunt Lucy suggests, in
a penetrating whisper that always becomes hiss-
ingly distinct when she is greatly agitated.
And at this resounding view of her case Madge
does rouse herself to open her eyes, and smile
with them, though the weary corners of her
mouth can not follow their example and say,
"No, I'm not, auntie dear."

It is the first time she has spoken to them;
it is the first time she has looked at them with
knowledge for a weary month, and in their joy
and gladness they would both heartily like to
cry and call for Philip, who has been most be-
comingly miserable during the whole term of
Madge's illness. But they have already de-
cided between themselves that "Madge must
not be flattered by the sight of Philip until the
doctor says she may be so flattered;" which is,
on the whole, a sagacious decision, since Philip
is not one of the facts that fond Memory has
recalled to her vividly as yet.

But, in the course of a short time, he and
other persons and things come back to her,
and she learns where she is, and hears how she
came here; and remembers every thing! re-
members even the sound of the flutter behind
her which overweighed and upset the balance of
her mind. With a shudder she turns away
from that remembrance, and asks,
"Where is Philip? how is he?"
"Quite near, and very anxious," Mrs. Hen-
derson says, concisely.

"Intensely anxious," Aunt Lucy adds; "the
blow it was to him that morning when his cous-
in came."

"What morning?" Madge asks quickly.

"The morning Phil brought the tidings of
your illness to us at Moorbridge," Mrs. Hen-
derson says, taking the subject into her own
hands with what she fears Aunt Lucy will think
uncourteous haste. But her dread that Aunt
Lucy, in the innocence of her heart, will say
something about Phil that had better be left
unsaid in Madge's weak state, overmasters her sense of courtesy. For she knows Madge better than the other, knows that the girl will hate and reproach herself keenly by-and-by, if her weakness permits a thought that should be checked, a hope that should be killed.

So Mrs. Henderson goes on briskly to tell Madge that Philip her lover is, and has been all the time, waiting for her recovery, at the wretched shanty in the village which they call an inn. And Madge, who does not think so much of that part of his devotion (women always bear the thought of bodily discomfort better than men), is touched to tears when they tell her how ill, how subdued, how unlike herself in manner he has been the whole time.

"I am fond of her, then, really fond of her; deserving of all the love and confidence she has in her to bestow," she feels, as the tears drip down on the pillow and make the cheek which presses it very damp and uncomfortable. Fond enough of her to have become depressed and unlike in manner that debonair Philip who asked for her hand and heart before she realized (though she had theorized about it) what it would mean to her did she make him these gifts.

She realizes what it will be now in this hour when she is recovering from the fever. Realizes freely all that she owes to him. More than this, she realizes freely all that she owes to herself, to her own promise, and resolves to pay the debt, however heavy a one it may prove.

"And his cousin? where is his cousin?" she interrogates very tranquilly, presently.

"He went home the same day, and we have not heard from him since," with that sort of suppressed, embarrased feeling which rebounds itself for its suppression by making itself manifest in an elaborate calm, which is to be detected as spurious instantly.

"Poor fellow!" Madge observes, laconically, and again for a few moments the original quietude resumes its sway in the sick-room.

But Aunt Lucy, who has been utterly hopeless for a month, and only partially hopeful since Madge began to show signs of restitution to herself—Aunt Lucy, who is hysterially grateful for the tiniest sign of interest in any thing mundane that the girl she looked upon as moribund can show, fans what she looks upon as a feeble earthly flicker after the lapse of a few moments, and says gently,

"Why do you say 'poor fellow,' dear Madge? he didn't seem to be at all the worse for the long ride and exposure to weather that was enough to lay a horse up."

Madge's face is suffused in an instant with a gleam of satisfaction that is more like a sunbeam than a smile. From the cursory mention made of Phil by Mrs. Henderson, she feared that he was paying some such penalty for their joint imprudence as she had paid. The relief of finding from her aunt's words that such is not the case is infinite, and Madge won't repent of her pitiful ejaculation, even though her own Philip has been loyally suffering many disagreeables for her sake at the village inn the last month.

She strengthens hourly now, and begins to take an interest in crisply narrated details of the every-day life in this mansion on the moor. She even asks to see Mrs. Graves, and, when that weird old lady stands before her, the wan, wasted girl raises herself and thanks her in words that seem to glow, for the "comportation, the shelter, she gave on that awful night."

Madge is hardly conscious herself of the fervor she throws into her thanks. Her own friends believe that it is the enthusiasm and emotional feeling which are the offsprings often of fever and weakness. But her shrewd old new acquaintance remembers the days of her own youth to some purpose, and is quite sure that Miss Roden is grateful for something beyond being saved from the cold blasts of Exmoor and the scanty comforts of the village inn. Compassionately she feels certain that the girl is grateful to the circumstances which intervened and saved her from being led into the temptation of learning to love the cousin of her lover.

Brisk breezes have been blowing over Exmoor for several days. For several days Madge has been aware of and eager to meet their beneficial influences. She has loved to have the window opened wide, and the curtains pulled back. She has exerted herself to lean forward and listen to the voice of Nature, that sounds with such thrilling clearness up in the rarified atmosphere of these solitudes. The river that rushes through the hamlet and past the Manor House is a bubbling, bouldery, noisy one, and in its course past her bedroom it tells many a tale, and sings many a song in a loud strain to Madge. Sometimes the moor-bred girl almost shrinks out her delight at the sight of the wild fowl that go wafting by to some inland haunt. Her bright, keen eyes watch, with the same joy she felt when a child, for a stray heron or a circling hawk. There is a rookery in the Manor House grounds, and every evening the spectacle is a fresh pleasure to her of the rooks darkening the sky in a compact mass as they fly home. She sits, propped up with pillows, to hear her mare Brunette led past her window at a walk first, then a trot, then a gallop. And radiantly she acknowledges that "Brunette's legs must be all right." In fact, she has, despite this long and trying illness, the morning bloom of life and joy in life about her still. She is young, and fresh and happy, and pure enough still, to go on taking interest and pleasure in unimportant things, and things that in themselves are not either pleasurable, beautiful, or interesting. But with all this keen appreciation, with all this fervent sympathy, with all this unabated interest in every thing that has life and motion, there is something wanting.

She has never once expressed a desire, much less a longing, to see the man she is going to marry.
She has not been unmindful of him; on the contrary, she has been thoughtful for him; sending him reassuring messages as to the state of her health, and urgent requests that he would try and amuse himself by snipe-shooting or going out with the stag-hounds. And he has obeyed her, and had some very successful nights on the moor with the wild fowl, and days on the moor after the red deer. He has brought home vivid reports of his exploits, and Mrs. Henderson has carefully retained them in a way that has often roused Madge to animation, and admiration of his skill, or prowess, or courage, as these qualities may have been respectively called into play. But though she has been sending him honeyed words of encouragement to go out and pursue these mimic wars, and to come home and send her terse accounts of them, she has never sighed for, never asked for, a sight of the hero.

Old Miss Roden, whose experience of betrothed lovers, under such circumstances, has been of a limited order, ascribes this reserve to the most divinely maidenly delicacy. Mrs. Henderson knows better, and aches within herself for Madge's sake for doing so. Philip himself having asked two or three times, with well-portrayed ardor, if "Madge didn't want to see him," and having been put off each time in a lame and impotent way, resigned himself (as well as he could, knowing, as he did, that those around were noticing it) to the facts.

Therefore, he is surprised this day, when, just as he is about to mount his horse and ride to a meet, a couple of miles off, Mrs. Henderson hastens up to him, and says, "Philip, will you come and see Madge; she wishes for you?"

"At last!" he says; and he can't help saying it with a half-smile and an expression playing about his face that is not that of a pleased and happy lover.

Rather slowly (according to Mrs. Henderson's way of thinking) he lifts his leg out of the saddle again, and prepares to follow her. The whole thing strikes him as inopportune. The day had promised well. He had secured a mount more entirely to his satisfaction than any it had been his luck to get since he had been hunting down here. The hounds were celebrated; the day was fine; the field, it had been announced, would be an exceptionally full one. And he had to give up all these things because it was a girl's whim that she "wished to see him" at this exact time, when she had so contentedly gone without seeing him for over long.

"Remember how ill she has been," Mrs. Henderson says, warningly, as she pauses for a moment at the door. As he nods his head in response, she opens it, and he sees Madge once more with all relations unchanged between them.

She is sitting in a square, high-backed chair, wrapped up closely in a silver-gray dressing-gown that is bordered and brightened with rose pink. Her eyes are bright, her mouth firm and smiling, her complexion clear and warm. She is one of the women who, by reason of their intense vitality, always look better in health than they actually are: It almost disappoints the man, who has been lodging at an inconvenience to himself for more than a month for her sake, that she should look so little like an invalid. He does not see the effort she makes to look bright and move easily. He does not feel the tension of her nerves while she constrains herself to seem "very much better," in order not to distress him. He appreciates neither her resolution nor her affectionate subtlety; for he does not understand them.

The room, an anteroom to that dark chamber wherein poor Madge had been lying ill so long, has been carefully put at its best by Mrs. Henderson, under Madge's orders. It was Madge who had begged that hyacinths and tulips might be sent for and spotted about in hastily improvised jardinières at every turn.

It was Madge who had declared for a chair instead of a couch, in order that he might think her strong. And Mrs. Henderson, knowing all these things, unjustly hates Philip when she sees how quietly he believes all he is, and how little grateful he is for the self-abnegation of Madge, of which he knows nothing.

Madge will rise up as he nears her, and when he is encircling her with his arms, he repeats his own words "At last," in a most effective manner, a manner that differs widely from the one in which he last uttered them (has he not avowed a love for and proficiency in amateur dramatics?).

"Dear Philip, I sent for you the instant I could—the instant I came in here; I knew you'd like it," Madge says, not at all in the tone of one who offers an explanation, but rather in that of one who mentions a most gratifying fact.

"And I came the instant you sent for me; still the time has been long enough since we met before to justify me in saying 'at last'" he questions, quietly. And a sense of disappointment and disapprobation of self steals over Madge. She has evidently failed in rendering something that she ought to render to him.

She subsides back into her chair and puts her hand on the sleeve of his short riding-coat.

"You were going hunting to-day, Philip?"

If she had said, "You are going hunting to-day," Philip would have offered to forego that on which his heart had been set for the last three days. But as she said, "You were going," he girded against the implication.

"I was, certainly, and I scarcely thought that, as you have done so well without me all along, you would command my society for more than half an hour to-day, dear."

He tries to say this playfully, but Madge understands him very well, and knows that her lot will be a hard one with this man, whether he loves her, or whether he does not.
"I am glad you're going," she says quickly, but all gladness is gone from her heart, poor child. "I am glad you're going, Philip, for the day is so fine, and a burst over the moor does every one good, I think. And I tell you what" (she draws nearer to him as she says this, and smuggles her hand more closely into his—he has been holding hers all the while)—"and I tell you what. Brunette knows the work so well, and would carry you splendidly, and—I wish you would ride Brunette, Philip; she's my pet horse."

"I was just getting on her when Mrs. Henderson came and told me you wished to see me," he says, quite coolly; and Madge, as she lies back with a beating heart and a face that is flushed scarlet, is told by Mrs. Henderson that she really must not excite herself any more to-day—she really must let Philip go. So Philip kisses her and goes off on Brunette gladly enough, and for the remainder of the day Madge is strangely silent. "Will he always take every thing for granted," she wonders; and "if he had loved her, would he have treated her own horse as his own property before she had asked him to do so?"

With these doubts in her mind she has to bear the inspection of two pairs of anxious eyes all day, and it is the longest and most miserable one of her illness.

CHAPTER XXII.
POOR BRUNETTE!

"Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day."

Hangman's Hill scowls in front of him, a barrier of gloom to the good stag who has run for his life five-and-thirty miles already this day. The ascent begins to be more abrupt, and only a few stragglers remain of the fine field that started in the morning. The rest have "fainted, and faltered, and homeward gone," long before Hangman's Hill is gained.

Foremost among these stragglers, well up with the master of the hounds himself, is Philip. Brunette has proved her knowledge of the country satisfactorily. She has been is a good place all day, and still she is going easily.

Philip Fletcher is a skillful and daring, rather than a merciful and sparing rider. But the evidence this day is certainly in favor of his having ridden Brunette with kindness and discretion, for the bonny brown mare is unpunished still.

Suddenly, in front of them, rises one of the regular moor-land stone fences, at a short distance from them still, but starting sharply out of the ground, as objects do start out in this light. Philip feels that more than one horse will refuse it, that more than one will fall, but Brunette will not falter.

Nevertheless, in spite of this faith in her pluck and her prowess, he mistakes a certain cautioniness, with which she approaches it, for unwillingness. Her apparent hesitation develops his spirit of impatience, and he deals her a blow and digs his spurs into her heaving sides with a force that makes her bound in her stride and fly the fences well in advance of the others.

As soon as she is over, instead of continuing the ascent in the direction he knows the stag and hounds are going, she turns to a downward incline at a pace which he speedily realizes he has no power to control. He gives her one long, steady pull, and she flies along the faster; and then the mare has a second and fiercer edition of Philip's practical ideas as to justifiable punishment.

He has no fear for himself. With all his faults, the man is an accomplished rider; and so, with a certain pleasant conviction that the "wayward beast will get the worst of it," he deals her a blow well between the ears, and digs his spurs into the sides that Madge's rosy, loving face has been laid against carelessly dozens of times. And he knows this. He cares little enough for her terrific pace. She has spoiled his fun by her burst, and now she shall go on for his pleasure. So she goes on till she seems to kick the moor from behind her, and drops suddenly into one of those woodead roads, which often rise and stagger one on the borders of the barren waste. And now he tries to turn her in her stride, but she goes straight, and he repents him of his severity a little when her head comes into furious collision with a tree, and Brunette drops down dead under him.

No thought of the sorrow for her horse that will be Madge's portion adds poignancy to the pain he feels at being left here in some humanity-abandoned spot where he has no landmarks. His brandy-flask is empty. Sandwiches, that have been made for more than half an hour, he always looks upon as masses of corruption; therefore, as soon as he recollects the case he carries; he shudders away from the recollection. He does not possess that exhaustive capacity for cursing which characterized the one who wrote,

"Whether he's out, or whether he's in,
To me it matters not a pin;
Be every curse of every sin.
On Maurice Darcy, Knight of Gwynne."

But though he does not possess it in the like degree, there is a good deal of force and power in the curses he calls down upon those men of North Devon and Somerset who have gone on and left him in the wilds with no other companion than the carcass of a dead horse.

His only guides out of this difficulty are his natural intelligence and his knowledge of the position Hangman's Hill occupies with regard to another beacon, which has a position he will recognize (if he ever gains it) with regard to a hill on the Somerset boundary-line. Once there, he will be in a region he knows. So he strikes out bravely enough in the direction he believes to be the right one, without a single sad, back thought of dead Brunette, be-
yond the natural regret any one must feel at the destruction of a good horse.

He must be left to follow his path over the weird moor-land, through the rapidly darkening night, alone. Another claims us for awhile.

"It is hard lines for a fellow, after being cooled down against his will, to be kicked out in this way," Phil Fletcher soliloquizes, as, after that total renunciation of every wish he had respecting Madge, which he had offered as a voluntary sacrifice, he mounts the top of the four-horse coach which is to convey him back to the realms of railways. He feels very much as if Philip, his cousin, were a dishonest reproduction of Esau—feels as if he had been defrauded of his birthright, and given not even a mess of pottage in exchange.

Mrs. Henderson's last words of advice ring in his ears, as the horses take a perilous descent at full gallop, and the coach swerves from side to side, like a rolling steamer in a storm.

"Go and work, and forget her, boy."

It is so easy to give advice, he reflects, and so uncommonly hard to act upon it. There is no chance of his "forgetting her" in the work he is doing now. That has become too purely mechanical, in spite of its being the keeping of accounts, the disarrangement of which would ruin a mighty house. Still, though it exercises his calculating, it does not exercise his intellectual qualities, and poor Phil knows that there will be no "nepenthe" for the memory of his lost Madge in it.

The way out of the western counties is a weary one when one is longing to be in town. And though Phil is not actually longing to be in town, he is longing to be on the high-road to some new and absorbing occupation.

There is no welcome pre-arranged for him in the little house in Chelsea, for the simple reason that his coming is unexpected. But he has a very hearty, spontaneous one from Chrissy and Mabel, and a very softly, tender one from his mother, whose wistful eyes detect in a moment that there is something amiss with her boy.

She delights in hearing details concerning Mrs. Henderson, whom she can only remember as a bright, bewitching, if not, strictly speaking, beautiful girl. She delights in hearing details concerning Mrs. Henderson's husband, and house, and daughters, and duties. But, to her son's surprise, she is unaffectedly unconcerned about Madge.

"If she makes Philip a good wife, he will make her a good husband," she says at last, when Phil rather awkwardly introduces her into the conversation; "but I fear, poor boy, that he has bowed his pride to his heart in the matter, and that she will make him suffer in both."

In his amazement, in his wrath, in his savage bewilderment at Madge being so misplaced in any one's estimation, much more in the estimation of one whom he loves and esteems as he does his mother, he bursts out with a truth—

"She is a thousand times too good for him—I've never known him do any good yet in his life, but he never did any thing half so bad as this before."

"As what, Phil dear?" his mother asks, in the soothing tones in which one addresses an incipient lunatic.

"As his engaging himself to Mad—Miss Roden; she's not to be spoken of in the same day with Philip; you'll adore her, Mum dear."

"As you do already," his mother thinks, pityingly. But she says nothing. Only this unspoken sorrow of her boy's sits heavy on her heart, and her subdued manner soon calls them all into active service about her, endeavoring to assuage what they believe to be some additional bodily suffering. But bodily suffering she bears without wincing. This dread that her "boys" may learn to do less than love one another, is harder to bear.

When she goes to bed this night Mabel and Chrissy turn to him with more questions concerning Madge.

"Is she a regular innocent country girl, or will she crush us with fine-lady airs when she marries Philip? Somehow, though he has said very little about her, he has given us the impression that the less she sees of us, his poor relations, the better she'll be pleased."

"Confound him for his lying impressions!" Phil bursts out in a rage. "I beg your pardon, girls; but the whole thing is a hideous nightmare to me, and I'm afraid if I throw it off that the reality will be worse."

All this is very mysterious to Mabel and Chrissy, as it would be to every one else who didn't chance to be in the secret of his feelings respecting Madge independently of his cousin.

And he knows that it must seem to them like the "blood and death" at a penny show—a mockery and a sham.

Wisely they refrain from saying anything more on that subject, and presently, in order to give them something fresh to think about, he says,

"I'm sick of that office-work. I wish I could get something that would give me more to do and to think about."

"A certainty is always nice," Chrissy says, reflectively.

"But Phil could afford to do something more congenial now," Mabel says, sympathetically; and this sympathy, though it does not make him more dissatisfied with his present position, emboldens him to talk about altering it more openly.

"He dismisses the subject until late that night, and the end of it is that he is made to understand that his sisters won't think him a reckless wretch even if he does "throw up the certainty and try for something else that will give him more to do and to think about"—that may perchance turn out to be the work that may enable him to forget Madge!

But before Phil can take any definite step himself toward altering the pattern of his life,
He cometh not,' she said.

chance kindly steps in as he is wont to do, and
spares Phil the responsibility.

In worthy imitation of some of the nobles of
the land, a member of Parliament and great
county magnate, desiring to make his second
son a partner in a great house of trade, comes
to the very house in which Phil is employed—
and Phil, as representative of the house on sev-
eral occasions, is thrown much into the society
of the lad, who takes a lad's liking for him.

Before the negotiation is completed, Death
intervenes and carries off Mr. Westcott, the
father. And then False Pride in the mother's
heart breaks it off altogether, and Roland West-
cott is 'saved from the degradation of a desk,'
as his mother terms it, and given unlimited time
to "choose a profession."

Finally it arranges itself in this way. The lad
bargains only for one thing, and submits himself
to his mother's judgment in all others. "If
you can get that jolly fellow Fletcher for my
tutor, I'll do as you like," he tells his mother.
So Phil is offered a stipend that makes his re-
nunciation of the certainty a very minor mat-
ter, and he accepts it and the situation, after
very brief deliberation.

Roland, a handsome, thin, lithe, tawny-haired
boy, with the beauty and grace and breeding
of a greyhound, is only eighteen, but already
Mrs. Westcott believes him to be the object of
any number of matrimonial designs. And so,
when an invitation arrives for him to spend
the last weeks of the year at his uncle's house, in
what his mother calls the "wilds of the coun-
try," she commands that Phil goes with him to
guard him against some coarsely snares which
she suspects.

"My brother-in-law, Mr. Francis Westcott,
is a very good sort of man," she explains to
Phil, "but his wife is a person of whom I nev-
er approved; her father was the apothecary
who attended the servants of the family when
the Westcots were in the country. I acknow-
ledged her when she married, but we have nev-
er been intimate."

Phil accepts this information with a careless,
amiable indifference that irritates the lady who
offers it. But "Roland is so absurdly fond of
him" she remembers, and she wants his re-
straining influence over Roland.

"The girls are pretty, but it is beauty of an
order that stamps them as under-bred at once;
they are large and fair and fat by this time, I
should think; then, again, they're so loud and
boisterous and overpowering in their manner,
that if one of them trapped Ronald I should
never get over it—never! I want you to
promise to see that nothing of that sort hap-

pos, Phil thinks this question an idle one.
Nevertheless he assents to it.

"Then I rely upon you," Mrs. Westcott
tells him, with a fervent pressure of the hand,
that Phil is quite conscious he does not de-
serve.

"And you will meet him at Paddington by
the half-past eleven train on Saturday?—I
shouldn't feel happy for him to arrive at Dela-
bourn without you?"

"Certainly I will; may I ask in what direc-
tion we go?" Phil laughs; "when I asked Ron-
ald just now, he said, 'Oh! on the borders of
what's his name,' which was vague."

"It's somewhere in Somerset or Devonshire,"
Mrs. Westcott says. Then she adds, scornfully,
"Not a family place, understand; merely rented
by Francis Westcott, because he likes the scen-
ery about Exmoor."

"Oh!" Phil rejoins as he takes a hasty
leave; and he spends the rest of that day in
trying to determine whether Exmoor is a suffi-
ciently wide tract to justify him in approaching
one of its borders again. Or whether his prom-
ise to Mrs. Henderson—his vow to himself—
does not demand that he should throw up this
appointment, and leave Ronald to his own de-
VICES?

Ultimately he comes to the conclusion that
it is a sufficiently wide tract to justify him in
going. And so Mrs. Westcott's plans are not
deranged.

They have been at Delabourn a week. They
have gained the freedom, so to say, of the freest
house in the world. In all respects, Phil finds
himself treated like one of the family by them
all. The master and mistress of Delabourn are
a happy, hearty couple, who are quite on good
terms with the world that looked upon theirs
as a misalliance: quite on good terms with it, and
quite contented that it should think what it
pleases of them and theirs. The two daughters
are, as Mrs. Westcott insinuated, fat, fair, large,
handsome girls, full of spirits and chaff, which
they have learned from their two brothers, one
of whom is an Eton boy, the other an Oxford
man. Phil lets himself like these girls very
much, for they are so utterly unlike Madge in
their hoydenish thoughtlessness, that there is no
disloyalty to his love for her in his doing so.
He feels quite safe with them, both on his own
account and on his pupil's. They will never
either try to trap Ronald, nor will they misun-
derstand him (Phil). They call him by his
Christian name, and request him to "just go
and get them" whatever they happen to want,
as readily as if they had known him all their
lives. In fact, they regard him and disregard
him, very much in the same way they do their
own elder brother.

Delabourn, though it has not the honor of
being a "family place" of the Westcott's, is a
fine specimen of an English home. A good
granite house, grown the color of a Danish
crow, standing in a hollow flat, almost surround-
ed by a belt of trees, with a grand view of Ex-
moor through the opening where the belt gapes. The air is pure, bright, fresh, invigorating, and still they are sheltered from the rasping moor winds. If Phil could only cease from wondering perpetually in which direction Halsworthy and Moorbridge House may be, this bracing air, in which he finds rest would do him good. But he does not know, and he dares not ask, and the puzzling over the problem in private neutralizes the good effects of the change.

The life they lead here is a primitive one. They dine early, and have ponderous suppers, which, somehow or other, do not give them nightmares. In the matter of digestion, indeed, "the strength of each individual young Westcott is as the strength of ten." It may be because their hearts are pure, or it may be because they take very violent exercise after their latest meal.

They have a carpet-dance nearly every evening, for their house is always full of guests; and one night, when Phil is plunging round in the trois temps with the handsomest and heaviest Miss Westcott, there comes a sharp pull at the porter's bell, and the next minute a strange gentleman, who has lost his way hunting on the moor, is introduced into the midst of the most hospitable family in the world.

They are all about and around him as Phil and his partner pull up, and with a savage wish in his heart that he "had never heard of the Westcotts," Phil recognizes his cousin—Madge's lover.

CHAPTER XXIII.
GRIF'S TROUBLE.

"'Tis only being in love or debt, that robs us of our rest."

After the receipt of that letter from Griffiths Poynter, Olive is happier even than she was on the previous night after her visitor's departure: happier and more decided as to her own course of conduct.

She is only a woman, and, cruel as it may seem, it is the truth—she is much happier for the knowledge that Grif wants to marry her, though she is quite resolved never to marry him. She is much happier for this proof that he is ready to play the part of King Cophetua, though she has lapsed into a position which, in her estimation, is lower than that of the beggar maid's.

She answers his letter in a flash of grateful enthusiasm, giving him her negative as gently as she can, but making it a clear negative, for all its gentleness. She tries to play the part of guide, philosopher, and friend to him, counseling him, with no affectation of humility, but with a good amount of common sense, to seek a wife in his sphere. "I know what I am, and you know what I am"—she writes these words with a pardonable glow of pride—"but your cousin would never forget the fact of having seen me at 'Barr and Battle's,' even if I loved you well enough to marry you. But you deserve better love than mine, and I feel this to be the case—luckily for you." And then she went on to tell him something of that cloud which Philip Fletcher had cast over her life.

As soon as she has time to think soberly after dispatching this letter, she recalls this confidence of hers, and thinks how supremely foolish she has been to make it. "What could have induced me to wear my heart on my sleeve in such an idiotic manner," she asks herself, in the futile way in which we all of us at some time or other of our lives have to repent of similar idiocy; "because a man has wanted to marry me, why must I go and tell him that I have wanted to marry somebody else. I shall not be happy now till I see Mr. Poynter, and find out whether he suspects that somebody else was or not."

Perhaps there might have been a taint of original sin in this desire for further communication with one whom she had desired to think no further about her. Perhaps there might have been a spice of coquetry in the wish to see Grif again. But more probably it was the human longing for companionship of its own order; and Grif's is the only companionship of that kind that she knows will be accorded to her gladly, eagerly, now that she has been forced to take office that she feels to be one continual degradation to her.

Griffiths at home in his aunt's house in Bedford Street, riding at anchor on the bosom of that family harbor, which is land-locked, so to say, by seven cousins, receives his letter of rejection by the five o'clock post, just as they are regaling him with afternoon tea.

The Misses Wainwright rather pride themselves on their afternoon-tea arrangements. They have it out of a picnic set, in which Rose-de-Barri, turquoise, blue, green, and clear yellow hues run riot in what they believe to be a conscientious imitation of old Stvres. When they get Grif on a low, fat chair in front of a big fire, with one of those cups and saucers in his hand, they feel as if they had him at their mercy, and might marry him without delay. He is always more affectionate to them at this hour: not with any design of raising false hopes in their expansionist hearts, but because he feels that he is a miserable impostor for joining in this tea orgie at all, and that they deserve some compensation for the wretched deception he is practicing on them by professing to like it.

A wafer of bread-and-butter that melts in his mouth and nearly makes him sick, has just been handed to him by one sister, and the most precious cup of all the set has been given into his unappreciative hand, when the postman's knock causes his heart to quail, and his naturally florid face to turn as nearly white as it is possible for it to turn. He knows that Olive will answer him at once, and he feels that if she misses two such girls as Madge and Olive—why he will never try a third, that is all.

A trim parlor-maid brings him in a letter on
HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID.

a salver, and his nails rattle against its plated surface as he picks the letter up. For a long, long time, Grif will never see a salver without hearing that rattle, and recalling the nervous sensations which caused it.

He reads it; and as he reads, something in his face convinces his cousins that it is "from a woman," and they hoist family danger-signals to one another; for it is as if they were entering a tunnel. All is in darkness around them! To the best of their knowledge, Grif never in his life had a letter from any other woman than one of themselves before.

One of them (the same one whose shoulders were being mantled that day in "Barr and Battle's" show-room, when he met Olive for the first time in town), whose hopes are highest respecting Grif just now; because he has amiablely suffered himself to be dragged round shopping with her, is the first to speak. She says, as carelessly as she can,

"Any news from the country, Grif?"

"It's from a friend in town," he says, briefly, and goes on reading it.

More danger-signals are hoisted; and one of the sisters says,

"Do you know when Miss Roden is coming to town?"

He shakes his head.

"I suppose she will come up before her marriage?"

"I hope she will," Grif says, heartily, for he is thinking that he will get Magde to intercede for him with Olive, and as yet, of course, he knows nothing of Magde's illness.

Silence glooms over the party after this, and at last the seven Miss Wainwrights rise, and say they "may as well go and dress for dinner." Grif casts a palpably appealing glance at his aunt. It says, as plainly as possible, "Stay!" and some of her daughters see it, and suspect at once "that mamma knows something which she has not told them concerning this woman unknown and Grif."

Mrs. Wainwright, who has risen with her daughters, falters under that glance, and falls away back into her chair, with a vague statement to the effect that she "can't bear to move from the fire." She is intensely miserable, for she has a presentiment that Grif is about to repose some honorable confidence in her, which will prove a white elephant, not to say a bitter burden. But she can't help herself; so she stays, and meekly prepares to receive it.

The instant her daughters are out of the room, her presentiment is realized.

"Aunt," Grif begins, "you won't be very much surprised to hear that I made Miss Ave- land an offer this morning?"

In this supreme moment, Mrs. Wainwright sees all the hopes her sanguine daughters have been entertaining for years crumble at her feet, and the dust of their ruins nearly chokes her. She can't speak; she can only gasp.

With the selfishness that a sorrow of this kind is almost sure to engender, Grif sees noth-
know, or I’ll whisper,” and he laughs quite gayly, for he feels sure that his pertinacity will be rewarded with success. Poor Grif! He little knows that it is not for his coming that Olive is doomed to wait.

“If I must, I suppose I shall,” she replies, getting herself away from Grif with an effort, as she hears a bedroom door open. Then she goes on to meet them, feeling that circumstances have made her sin against her daughters.

They surround her—swarming in their big dinner dresses all over her room as she changes her cap with shaking hands, and puts something light over her shoulders by way of looking festive. And they ask her who that letter was from? and what Grif said to her when they came out? and if she can imagine who the woman can be, and when he can have met her?” until she is harassed into making ample confession of all she knows about it.

With all the Miss Wainwrights are practical. So they hear the confession, and then say, they “must speak about it after dinner; it won’t do to keep Grif waiting.” So they go down to dinner, and Grif, being very much absorbed, does not notice that they are all more or less constrained with him.

The following day Mrs. Wainwright is torn to pieces. Her daughters tell her that she “ought not to go and countenance any thing of the sort,” and the memory of her promise to Grif lies heavy on her heart. The excitement, the agitation, the disappointment make her ill, and opportune bring on a bilious attack that sends her to bed completely prostrated. And then the eldest Miss Wainwright—the cousin who has resigned her own honorable intentions toward him in favor of her younger sisters—approaches him.

“Grif, dear,” she begins, “I am quite old enough to speak to you on a very delicate subject.”

Grif, who is inducting himself into a pair of faultlessly fitting, pale-gray gloves, gets scarlet, and frees his hands at once, feeling that something will be said that will prevent his taking the air with a light heart and in gay attire this day. Instinctively he looks round, and sees, with dismay, that the other six cousins have retired.

“I thought it better not to say any thing to you before the girls,” Miss Wainwright commences, solemnly, “especially before Arabella” (Arabella is the one whose hopes are brightest at the present juncture), “but, my dear Grif, I may speak to you as a sister, may I not?”

Grif assures her that she may.

“Poor mamma is too ill to venture to attempt to do it; though she feels it to be her duty, she has with much reluctance delegated her duty to me.” And then Miss Wainwright proceeds, with much effusion, to expound her views concerning the young person at “Barr and Battle’s.”

“She’s as well born and bred, and a precious deal better educated than we are,” Grif states. And Miss Wainwright, with much practical, worldly wisdom, shakes her head and answers,

“And if she were fifty times better born and bred and educated than we are, or than she is, all these facts would be as nothing compared to the one that she has been a show-room girl in a London shop; I can’t help it, Grif, neither can you; we can’t gag people, even if we tried, and people would talk; do give it up, dear; she has refused you; why go and humble yourself to a girl you ought not to marry.”

Grif is full of good family feeling, so he merely thanks his cousin for her kindly interest, and refrains from telling her how sorry she will be for this, if ever he does win Olive for his wife.

They know that he is slipping from their grasp when, by-and-by in the afternoon, Grif goes out telling them that he shall dine at his club to-night, for, however things go with Olive, he knows very well that he will be in no mood for the home circle.

Olive has finished her day’s work abroad, and now that she has had her tea, there remains nothing more for her to do. True, there is the real womanly panacea of needle-work, but Olive does not care for needle-work very much, and very rarely touches the little feminine implements unless she has holes in her gloves or collars.

The gas is lighted, and it is just seven o’clock. Oh! the weary hours that she will have to pass before she will feel justified in going to bed and striving to forget her troubles in sleep. The long weary hours, with no books, no music, no pleasant intercourse with her fellow-creatures to fill them! The prospect of her solitude overpowers her in her desolation, and she lays her arms on the table, and her head on her arms, and is preparing to indulge in a head-ache-provoking, hearty cry, when “Mr. Poynter” is announced.

He has been inflating himself with hope all the way as he came, and the contrast between his appearance and the dolefulness which she had been anticipating strikes her joyfully, and makes her give him such a warm greeting.

“I am glad to see you, oh! I’m so glad to see you,” she says, rising up and advancing to meet him, with a fervor she had never infused into her manner toward him before. And then she remembers that only yesterday she refused to marry him, and the awkwardness of it all embarrasses her for a moment or two, during which time he marks all her variations of color, and gathers what he believes to be valuable information from them.

“I’ve come in spite of your prohibition, you see, and I’m rewarded by your being the least bit in the world glad to see me; and now tell me, Olive, what made you write in that way yesterday?”

Deep in her heart, unacknowledged even to herself, there lives a hope that in some way or other Madge will find out that Philip does not
love her, and will break off the engagement, and leave Philip honorably free to return to her (Olive). It is there, and every now and then it wells up and makes itself felt, though Olive has been trying her hardest of late to kill it. It wells up and makes itself felt now, and Olive could not marry Griffiths Poyerter; no, not even if he were three times the dear, good fellow he is, not even to escape from the desolation which so overcame her previous to his coming in.

"I wrote yesterday as I should write today, or to-morrow, or every day," she answers. "I'm not a bit worth your liking in that way; what a pity that you should do it."

"The old love stands in my way," he says, sorrowfully. "Oh, Olive! if you would but believe that the memory of a first love won't last, can't last all your life; if you would but let me be the one to try and efface it," he pleads, very humbly.

Olive shakes her head. "It's not that; I'm not cherishing any folly of that sort," she says, feeling guiltily the whole time that she is doing the very thing she repudiates, "only my heart went sound asleep after that early mistake, and I'm sure that no one will ever have the power to wake it again; but we can be friends, though we can be nothing more; can't we?"

It is his turn to shake his head now.

"I can't be any thing but friendly toward you, if you mean that," he says; "but as for seeing you often—no."

"No, that would be folly, on second thoughts," she says, quite calmly. And then her desire to gain some information respecting Philip overmasters her, and she says,

"When are you going home?"

"I may as well go at once, if you're not going to have anything to say to me."

"And when shall you see Madge?" she goes on, not noticing the latter part of his speech.

"Very soon; I shall go and tell Madge my troubles."

"You were very fond of Madge?", she says, in a sharp, questioning way, and he replies, "Fond of her? God bless her, I loved her dearly, and thought for years that some day or other I should ask her to be my wife; but I never did, you know, luckily."

"Why luckily?"

"She would only have had the pain of refusing me, and now there's nothing of that sort between us. Do you know that poem of Peacock's, 'Love and Age'? I often think that when I am old I shall feel exactly toward Madge Roden as he did toward the one he addresses in that poem."

"She won't be Madge Roden then, she'll be Madge Fletcher," Olive says, sententiously, "and I don't remember enough of the poem to see the application in it to your case."

"These are the verses I had in my mind," he says, and then he quotes:

"And I lived on to wed another,
No cause she gave me to repine;
And when I heard you were a mother,
I did not wish the children mine.

"My own young flock in fair procession,
Made up a pleasant Christmas row,
My joy in them was past expression,
But that was thirty years ago."

Olive gives an unfeigned shudder, as he brings his quotation to an end.

"Gracious!" she says, "fancy living thirty years in this dull world without the society of the one we love—if we love any one at all," she hastily adds; "what's the other verse? equally drearily resigned?"

"Now there was no attempt at anything like resignation in the first verse; how you pervert his meaning; he plainly avows that he has found full compensation; the other is the last verse of the poem, and the finest of the lot, I think;"

"'But tho' first love's impulsion'd blindness
Has passed away in colder light,
I still have thought of you with kindness,
And shall do till one last good-night.'"

Olive puts out her hands to avert the stream of poetry. She is not sympathetic with the tenderly friendly feeling that fills Grif's heart for Madge.

"That's how you'll feel for Madge 'to the end,' is it?" she says; "no one will feel that for me."

"Olive, my love! give me the right to feel that—and more; give me the best right, a husband's right."

"I told you 'No,'" Olive says, softly, "and I meant it; it's no use going over the ground again and again. I shall live and die alone."

And this is all the satisfaction Griffiths has in return for making his aunt bilious, and braving his cousins' displeasure.

CHAPTER XXIV.
"AND HOW'S BRUNETTE?"

PHILIP, foot-sore, hungry, travel-stained, and surprised, is in one of his most uncompromising moods. It annoys him that any explanation should be necessary to account for his unexpected appearance. Not that "these people," as he instantly dubs the Westcotts in his mind, seem to expect any explanation. But he feel that one is due to them, since he has burst in upon them in this way, and will be very glad of the shelter of their roof for the night.

Finding Phil here too, apparently quite at home on Exmoor—on what he has come to regard as his own exclusive preserves, annoys him. "What's he thinking about here?" he asks himself, suspiciously. And the suspicion makes itself manifest in his manner to his cousin, in a way the Westcotts feel inclined to resent on the spot.
"What on earth brings you here?" Philip asks in an insolent way of Phil, the instant the relationship between them is made clear. And the handsomest Miss Westcott, whose plunging waltz has been interrupted, rotors before Phil can rejoin.

"He has more cause to ask that question in that tone of you, I think."

Good-natured Mrs. Westcott quietly standing by, marks that there is not a perfectly fair understanding between these two cousins thus strangely met, under her roof, and hastens to interpose.

"The tale of the disaster will be told more easily, Mr. Fletcher, when you have changed these wet clothes and had some supper. Phil" (he is "Phil" to the whole family), "will you see to your cousin's comfort?"

"Certainly; we've rigged one another out many a time before to-day, haven't we, old fellow," Phil answers, good-temperedly, as he conducts his cousin from the room. But they all see plainly that there is no responsive good-temper in that cousin's face.

"He's a surly, ill-tempered fellow, for all his good looks," one of the girls says. "I suppose he's the one who is going to be married to pretty Miss Roden?"

"And on the strength of that grand marriage he's inclined to lord it over our Phil," the other girl rejoins. And they both resolve to make more of Phil than ever, firmly believing that in their favors is to be found the true mandragora which can drug all disagreeables to rest.

Somehow or other, though Phil has nothing to do with his Madge, or his Madge's horse, Philip has a decided repugnance to mentioning Brunette. And yet he knows that it will be better for him to tell out the truth at once, for it will surely be dragged from him in the course of conversation. Why, indeed, should he hesitate about it? Nevertheless he does hesitate; and it is not until after he is arrayed in one of Phil's suits, and is ready to descend to the region from whence savory odors of salmis and broils of game are rising up, that he says, with laborious carelessness,

"By-the-way, the horse that came to grief to-day was Madge's mare Brunette; awful bore altogether."

Phil knows that he has not the slightest right in the world to let his blood rush from his heart to his head, and then go back again with a flop, as it appears to do, when he hears this. He knows that he has no business to let indignation vex him in the way it does at this unconcerned mention of a loss that will be a severe one to Madge, and that will be mourned by her as a bitter grief. He knows all this, and so he chokes back the words that are rising—the words of condemnation and rebuke. This is all he can do.

"Poor Miss Roden," he says; "she'll be very much cut up, I fear."

"There'll be a fuss about it, most likely."

Philip says, drawing himself to his fine full height as he enters the drawing-room, and a pleasant feeling steals over him to the effect that the whole family must see how very much he is like "Phil," of whom they seem so fond, and how very much better-looking he is.

Supper is spread in the library for him, "in order that he may not feel cut off from social intercourse, as he would if they banished him to the dining-room," Mrs. Westcott tells. For the library opens out of the drawing-room, and as his host sits down and takes a glass of sherry with Philip, the young men of the party go in at intervals and are introduced to him while he takes his supper leisurely.

He has ascertained how far Halsworthy is from Delabourn, and how far the Manor House, where Madge has gone through her illness, is, and he is at rest in his mind. When he has daintily satisfied his hunger, he goes back to the drawing-room, and addresses Phil.

"I find I'm nearer Halsworthy than the Manor House. I shall go over and have a look at the place to-morrow; will you come with me, Phil?"

"A look at what place?" Phil asks, agitatingly enough, it must be confessed, for he perfectly well knows to what place his cousin refers.

"Why, my—Moorbridge House," Philip answers; and young Ronald Westcott, flirting violently with one of his cousins in the corner, assures that young person that he "can hardly stand the amount of side that fellow puts on."

"Oh yes, I'll go—with pleasure," Phil says, hesitatingly. "Then feeling really anxious that nothing should be done to make Madge anxious or uneasy, he gets himself closer to his cousin, and says, in a low voice,

"You'll let Miss Roden know as soon as possible that you're all safe, of course."

"Shall I make you my messenger of good tidings, old boy?" Philip laughs, mockingly. "My dear fellow, the longer I keep the fate of that blessed mare of hers from her, the better for her health; she will not kill herself with anxiety about me."

He speaks this last sentence in a very low tone of voice, and Phil has no answer for him. Each word that Philip utters, each look that Philip gives when speaking of her, convinces Phil more and more that poor Madge has not done well.

In pursuance of their plan of making much of Phil, and of proving to Philip that "they don't think so much of him, though he is going to marry Miss Roden," the Miss Westcotts volunteer to drive the two young men over to Halsworthy in their own low, four-wheeled dog-cart, the next morning. The handsomest (she is also the eldest) Miss Westcott drives, and asks Phil to sit in front with her. And the one who is pushed behind with Philip leans over the rail and directs her conversation chiefly to Ronald's tutor. Altogether Philip
He is not so exclusively the object of the Miss Westcott's devotion on the homeward journey. Philip comes in for such a fair share of attention that he is quite contented to stay one more night at Delabourn. And when the next morning he starts for the Manor House, the girls speed the parting guests by accompanying him to the door-steps, from whence they watch him ride away, and shout farewells to him.

"Shall I give any message from you to Madge?" Philip asks, suddenly, of his cousin, who accompanies the happy lover a short distance.

"Remember me most kindly to her, and tell her how glad I am she's better."

"Won't that sound rather cruel?" Philip says, laughing, "you having been her cavalier on the memorable occasion, might surely say a little more about it."

"Would you like me to send word to her that I was a fool not to have remembered the landmarks better, and that I have been feeling myself a fool ever since," Phil asks, in an annoyed tone.

"Well, I think that would be more flattering to her than the commonplace, 'Glad to hear she's better,'" Philip answers, carelessly.

"Say what you like—she won't misunderstand me," Phil says, recovering his good-temper, and then Philip begins to grumble.

"I hope she won't insist on heading a crusade against the crows for the recovery of the carcass of Brunette; I expect to be made to repent having touched the mare; Madge is capable of having a relapse, and going straight off into another brain-fever when she hears of it."

"She's incapable of doing anything to hurt you; as she lent you the mare, she'll do nothing to make you repent having ridden her," Phil says, re-assuredly.

"Ah! but the worst of it is, I had taken the mare before she offered it to me; and when I mentioned that trifling fact, I don't think she liked it; it's always incomprehensible to me where women draw the line; so far and no farther you may go with safety—after that a sudden destruction comes upon you unawares, and a criminal is a fool to what you feel."

To all this Phil answers not a word. He has been listening eagerly, hoping that one word of regret for the fate of the mare, because she was dear to Madge, will fall from Philip's lips. But no such word is uttered. His sorrow for Brunette is as selfish as is every other joy and sorrow of his.

There is something that strongly resembles anger between these two young men, when they part presently, though they call each other 'old fellow,' and each adds, 'let's hear of you soon.' Philip's last words are,

"If I were you, I'd find out how old Westcott will cut up; the family's good, and the girls are passable, and you might have either of them."
To this Phil vouchsafes no answer, for he is thinking that it was in this spirit, probably, that Philip asked for Madge’s hand and heart.

It is late that night before Philip Fletcher reaches the Manor House, and instantly, on entering the yard even, he is met by an anxious group. Madge is distraught with anxiety and suspense, he is told. And then simultaneously a questioning cry arises, as they detect that he is not on Brunette.

He answers them almost roughly, for he is sorely perplexed and annoyed. “If you’ll only give a fellow, who has been nearly smashed to pieces, time to draw breath, you shall know what has happened,” he says; “the long and the short of it is, that the mare lost her temper and killed herself, and nearly killed me; but one explanation will suffice, I think, and I’d better give that to Madge.”

“Go up stairs speaking cheerfully,” Mrs. Henderson suggests; “Madge is weak enough to declare that she won’t go to bed until she has seen you;” and then Mrs. Henderson pities him, as she would any one who was unlucky enough to be the innocent cause of giving intense pain to Madge.

“My dear boy,” she says, “you have the satisfaction of knowing that Madge will feel that if any thing could have spared her pet, you would have done that thing.”

And Philip winces under a conscience prick, as he vividly remembers the way he lashed and spurred poor Brunette into that last fatal burst. Her face is as pink as the border of her dressing-gown as he goes into the room, and she comes forward to meet him with an excited gladness gleaming in her eyes, that makes him tremble for what he has to tell.

“Lost your way, dear, I suppose,” she cries out in her ringing tones, “like I did with your cousin; thank Heaven, it hasn’t ended in the same way; you’re safe back, dear Philip; and how’s Brunette?”

Madge declines to guess. She dislikes being rebuked for her loving anxiety about the mare that was hers before she was Philip’s. But she does not decline in an aggrieved or aggravating way.

“Tell me, Philip. I am not a good hand at speculation.”

There is not a grain of sulkiness in Madge Roden’s whole nature; but in very truth now her heart is too full for her to go into the folly of guessing about any thing. The girl has been pondering about the possible whereabouts of these two absentees for hours; and now one of them has reproved her because she has questioned him concerning his fellow-traveler, about whom he ought to have been interested for her sake.

So the notes in which she says, “Tell me, Philip, I am not a good hand at speculation,” fall flatly on his ears, and hurt that sensitive self-love, and impart just that degree of coolness to his manner which may be felt but not defined. It falls on the girl who has been so very ill like a biting blast from the North. She dreads the continuance of it so fearfully, that she does violence to the truthfulness of her nature, and affects to fall into that humour of his (that humour, alas! which is past), of guessing whom it is he has met with.

“I feel sure it’s Grif,” she says; “dear old Grif; why hasn’t he been to see me?”

She can’t feel a genuine enthusiasm about this friend of her youth; but she gets up such a successful imitation of it, that Philip feels at once that he is provided with a real grievance.

“It was not ‘Grif,’” he says, and his words fall off his lips with the distinct rattle of single; “it was not Grif, if Grif was the person who behaved so very—very obtrusively that day at Winstaple.”

“I called him ‘Grif’ before I could speak plainly,” she says, with a mighty effort at calmness, an effort that enables her to swallow the mountain of indigation that has rapidly developed from the choking ball, to which we are all well accustomed.

She is leaning back in her chair as she says this, looking so fair and fragile, that he is almost constrained to proclaim himself incapable of appreciating her on the spot—almost inclined to proclaim himself unworthy, and then to vanish forever from these fettering influences, and hold himself a free man once more. Free to seek Olive Aveland!

Almost, but not quite. In such matters as these Philip is a coward at heart. So he prejudices and persuades according to his wont; and as soon as expediency has forced him back into the shallow semblance of good humor, he says, adroitly,

“I suppose it’s the fact of my overestimating him so very highly that made me impatient of your guessing the name of any lesser man; just imagine my meeting with Phil on the moor, he’s—”

“—Your cousin,” she interrupts, sharply.
And then all her weariness, all her doubts, all her fears, and all her love, conspire together, rise up and overmaster her.

"Oh! why has he come?" she says.

"Apparently he entertained the notion that he was at liberty to come without rendering up his reasons to me," Philip answers. "Why shouldn't he be here as well as anywhere else? What is he to you, that you should question—"

He checks himself as he utters this word; for even in his anger he feels he has gone too far. But he has an uneasy feeling that Mrs. Henderson and old Miss Roden are lying in wait to reprove him for showing want of consideration for Madge, and he is altogether thrown out of gear.

"What, indeed?" Madge suffers herself to sigh; then the absurdity of it strikes her, the absurdity and the injustice of it. Why should she sigh? why should she lachrymosely ask, "What, indeed?" Why shouldn't she take the intelligence of Phil's near vicinity cheerfully and unconcernedly?

"He's your cousin, you know, Philip, like your brother almost," she says, in her natural, blithe tones. And then she holds her hands out to him, and puts her face up toward him, and he knows that he is dismissed for the time, and that she is yearning for the love and sympathy she will find when he is gone, in the companionship of her aunt and friend.

It comes upon him strongly just now that not so would Olive have dismissed him under such circumstances. All Madge's sweet patience, all Madge's innocent charms, all Madge's delicate consideration for himself, are as nothing to him as he contrasts her with that other one, upon whom he had trampled with impunity so frequently.

But the time is not ripe yet for the final overthrow of this castle of ambition which he has built of cards. Just a little longer he will feign, though he fumes most tryingly against the necessity of doing it.

"I didn't come to an end of my explanation," he begins; "either I grew misty, or you grew impatient, which was it, Madge? Phil's down here tutoring with a young fellow called Ronald Westcott; they're staying at Westcott's uncle's place, Delabourn, and he's awfully gone on one of the girls."

Madge listens to all this gravely, decorously; but, for all this outward, grave decorum, she is sorely disturbed within. She does not believe that Phil is awfully gone on any girl but herself, and she feels a traitor to Philip for believing that his cousin is thus falsely true to her still. Underlying this sentiment there is a feeling that Phil is unkind and ungenerous in coming back, and involuntarily she prays that she may not be led into temptation.

"I shall be well enough to go home in a few days," she says, making an effort to detach her thoughts from the dangerous subject; "how glad I shall be, though I have had such kindness here; but home is home. I shall rest and enjoy it more than ever." 

"I should think so," Philip grumbles. Then he can't resist the desire he has to blame somebody else, since he feels so miserably to blame himself, and he adds, "I know that I shall feel considerably relieved when I get you out of this den, to which my cousin's confounded imprudence consigned you."

And then they say good-night once more and part; Madge calling to him, as he reaches the door, to "be sure to order Brunette round in front of her window early to-morrow morning."

The ladies are all assembled in a little up stairs sitting-room, and they call him in as he is passing along the corridor. Mrs. Graves, eager, brisk, and bright-eyed, is the one to address him first.

"Well! she took it more quietly than I expected; much more quietly than I should have taken the news of a favorite horse of mine being done for."

"There was no need to go into that little matter to-night," he says, as carelessly as he can; but his eyes rove from Mrs. Graves to Mrs. Henderson's face, and it stings him to read marked disapproval there.

"It would have been wrong to disturb her to-night, wouldn't it?" he pleads against his will.

"The less Madge is deceived the better for her happiness and yours," she answers, coldly, for she has been very fond of Philip, and though that fondness is decreasing rapidly, she can not bear that he should show himself in his true mean colors before strangers.

The reproof amends him, partly because he knows that he deserves it, and partly because the friendship of the reprover stood him in good stead in former days, and he shrinks from casting it behind him now. But he reminds himself that very soon he will be master of Madge and her actions, and of Moorbridge House.

It is absurd to start by being in awe of one of Madge's friends, even though she is the best and dearest of them all. Ay! even though she has the mighty claim on him of having been kind to Olive.

"Even if it were a more important matter than it is, it rests entirely between Madge and myself; understand that, if you please, entirely."

There is an unmistakable frown on Philip's fair, handsome face as he says this, and a corresponding one darkens Mrs. Henderson's instantly. Tender, and gentle-hearted, and manured as she is, she has a high spirit that no assumption on Philip's part can daunt.

"You can hardly expect me to tell her lies if she asks about her mare. I should dread some awful punishment overtaking me if I deceived the most truthful, unsuspicious nature in this world."

She passes from the room and takes her way to Madge's; but before she reaches the door, Philip, with all the winning grace that fits him
like a glove, and that he can assume at any moment, is by her side.

"My punishment has commenced already," he whispers; "I'm growing half-hearted about many things, I'm losing your friendship, and I've lost Madge's love."

Mrs. Henderson is gentle-hearted, as has been said, and now, as he speaks what she knows to be wholly true, she is full of pity for him.

"Poor fellow!" she whispers; "it's a tangled yarn, I fear; but honest, straight-forward endeavors to unravel it might bring happiness to us all again."

"What do you mean?" he asks, suspiciously.

"Oh, Philip! you say you 'have lost her love;' has not she lost yours, if, indeed, she ever had it? Don't let the thought of position and fortune drag you to perdition and Madge to misery."

"Are you advising me to break the engagement?" he asks, angrily.

"God knows I'm not capable of advising any longer; I implore!"

"Thanks: that my cousin, the rightful man, may reign in my stead?" he responds, savagely.

"No, Mrs. Henderson, Madge shall pay a penalty for her fickleness as well as myself. You both knew the worst of me when I proposed to Madge; what have I done since to forfeit the good opinion you then held of me, in spite of many things? We must both make the best of it."

With this he goes away, and Mrs. Henderson's heart grows heavy as she feels that she is compelled to relinquish her last hope.

"He can't be stung into breaking it off," she sighs; "all his nice feeling is pretense; he is selfish to the core of his heart."

"Who was that whispering to you in the corridor?" Madge asks. "I hate people to whisper, it always sets me wondering, and then I hate myself for that, because it's small curiosity. Who was it?"

"Philip."

"Oh, Philip! and why didn't you both speak out? Did you think I was asleep, or didn't you want me to hear what you were talking about?"

"Madge, dear, the confinement of the sick-room is telling upon you, indeed," Mrs. Henderson says, with a very transparent attempt at gayety.

"Was Philip telling you about his cousin?"

"About his cousin? No, dear."

"His cousin is down near to us," Madge goes on, rapidly, "at least he's at Delabourn with some people called Westcott, and—and I don't think Philip likes his being there."

"He said nothing to me about it," Mrs. Henderson says, briefly. Phil is a subject on which she will not be tempted to talk. "Madge, dear, go to bed now; to-morrow you are to go down stairs; the next day, possibly, you may go home."

The prospect of a change after the long, dreary confinement to her room, thrills Madge with pleasure. She is still young enough to be liable to these abrupt changes of feelings, still young enough to cast out sorrow at the most distant approach of joy.

"It will be great fun going down into that funny old room again," she says; "I'll ask Mrs. Graves to have her china washed, and Philip and I will re-arrange it; and Brunette shall be brought round to the window—"

Her eyes beaming with this small excitement, are fixed on Mrs. Henderson's face, and a wave of color, a flicker of emotion suddenly passes over that face, and makes the girl exclaim,

"What is the matter? What have I said?"

"Nothing, nothing, Madge," Mrs. Henderson says, in that hasty tone of wishing to drop the subject, which invariably makes one question more deeply and eagerly.

"But I must have said something," Madge persists; "what could have made you look red and put out; was it about the china? or (with a quick qualm) was it about Brunette?"

For a full moment Mrs. Henderson hesitates, hopes to think of something to say that may avert the necessity of her dealing this blow which will hurt both Madge and Philip in different ways. Now that it has come to this point, she feels her position of witness, and testifier against Philip's candor most bitterly. Oh! dear, dear! Her own love-troubles had scarcely ceased to occupy a prominent position in her mind, before she was distracted by the love-troubles of others. All these thoughts dart through her mind in that moment of time, and then Madge says again, very impatiently this time,

"Well, well! what was it about?"

"Oh, Madge!" Mrs. Henderson says, fairly cornered now, "you have much to be humbly grateful and thankful for, dear. Philip is safe, but he met with an awful accident, and Brunette is—"

"Not 'all right,' as Philip told me she was," Madge interrupts, with her eyes kindling and her mouth quivering.

There is a long, awkward pause after this. Madge leans back with her face buried in her hands, not crying but thinking, with horrible intensity. "This can't go on always," she reflects, "this system of deception would quickly drive me mad with conjecture?" With a dry sob and a gulp she rousses herself, and puts her two hands out to Mrs. Henderson, who answers the appeal by telling all she knows of the end of Brunette.

Madge listens to the recital without saying a word. She makes no show of that aching at her heart, which is, after all, not so much on account of the death of the horse, as it is on account of the disposition of the man who is to be her husband. The way in which he has treated it, and her in connection with it, seems to be symptomatic of something from which Madge recoils. He has not been faithful and
true about a thing which he may consider small. How will it be about greater matters?

"Philip wished to keep it from you to-night, he was so anxious you should have undisturbed rest," Mrs. Henderson says, making the best of it, and Madge answers piteously,

"We won't talk about it, please; to-morrow the light will make it all clear, but to-night I feel in a mist."

There is not a shadow of reproach on Madge's face when he comes to her the next morning. She is down stairs by this time, dusting and toy ing with and arranging Mrs. Graves's quaint old chins figures, and vases, and bowls, and tazzas. She has schooled herself well in the night. She has tried to put herself in Philip's place, and has resolved to save him from feeling hurt at the cost of any amount of trouble to herself. He is touched into tenderness, and something like truth, by her demeanor. And the kiss he gives her in return for the sympathetic way her hand nestles into his when the interest of the story of Brunette culminates, has more of a lover's warmth in it than any previous one has had. And so the glow of the semblance, at least, of the sun of happiness is over these young people for a while.

Presently Madge begins searching in her pocket, "I have a letter here to show you. What can I have done with it? Oh, Philip! I'm so shocked, and so will you be, I know. No! this isn't it; I did think she'd have confided in me. Oh! here it is, look, from Olive Aveland." And she hands him a letter from the girl for whom his heart is sick, without a single suspicion in her mind.

Tingling all through his veins (for his blood is less false than his actions), Philip takes the letter, and tries to read what Olive has to say to Madge.

The characters dance before his eyes, and Madge's words, "Oh, Philip! I'm so shocked, and so will you be, I know," keep on ringing in his ears. Can Olive be married, or be going to marry? He can't control himself, though he knows that he is calling Madge's keenest attention on himself. He holds the letter with a shaking hand before eyes that see nothing, and lets his head drop lower and lower on his breast.

This continues for a period of time that can hardly be computed. To Madge, upon whom so many things dawn while it lasts, it seems long. But an echo would not have had time to die away upon the ear before Madge breaks the silence—breaks the silence with words that, in the midst of his anguish at the loss that will surely ensue of so much that he keenly appreciates, give him a certain relief.

"Why, Philip, you love her," Madge says, "and you would have married me!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

"HE WILL RETURN, I KNOW HIM WELL."

There is no going back, after this, for Madge and Philip Fletcher—no possibility of their resuming their former relations, after that flash of truth has irradiated Madge's mind. Philip, with a vivid remembrance of the Moorbridge estate, and all the honor, and glory, and luxury the Moorbridge estate represents, would make a struggle to obliterate the impression, and have every thing as it was before. But he reads in Madge's face and Madge's manner that the struggle would be a futile one. And with a biting sense of failure upon him, he lays Olive's letter down.

"I can't read it now," he mutters; and his head is bent, and his eyes are fixed on the floor, and he knows, for all these averted looks, that Madge is not the least bit in the world angry with him. He feels that she is full of pity for him, and somehow this pity galls him, and tries him very hardly.

"And now I know that you must have loved her like this before ever you saw me. Poor, poor Philip, and poor Olive! how awful for her!"

The compassionate accents, the entire abnegation of Madge's own right to his love and loyalty, make him wince. He can't speak, or at any rate he does not attempt to speak; he only blinks away two tears that will, provokingly enough, well up and blur his vision.

Madge has risen from the sofa where she had been seated by his side, and now she has placed herself on a low chair just in front of him. There is in her manner nothing but such confidence and friendliness, that it makes Philip feel positively abject. He feels that she is not angry with him for having preferred another girl to herself. He knows that every other part of his conduct is condoned save this—that loving as he does, he would have married her.

"I wish you could make up your mind to read Olive's letter," Madge says, presently; "there's no complaint in it, but, oh!" (with a shudder) "when you find what she's been obliged to do, poor darling, your blood will boil—mine does."

He looks up at this, eagerly, questioningly.

"Has she married?" he asks, finding his voice at last.

"Married! no, gone into a show-room as a—"

She is checked by a sigh of relief from him.

"Did you know that and keep it from me, Philip?" with quick discernment. Then, as he does not answer, she adds, "I wish you would try to tell me the—"; she is on the verge of saying "the truth," but substitutes the words "all about it." instead.

He tells her something, he tells her many things, about it. But he does not tell her "all," or nearly all, that there is to tell about poor infatuated Olive and himself. But so much of his story as it pleases him to narrate,
Madge listens with her heart in her eyes, and her mind busily at work.

"Poor, poor Olive! fancy you're meeting her by accident in town, and you two being obliged to be cool, and constrained, and conventional, in your behavior to each other."

"Poor Madge" might be said with greater accuracy, if she had only known how little coolness, or constraint, or conventionality, there had been in that intercourse of theirs about which she so besprinkled them with pity.

"Philip," earnestly, "you can't let this go on now?"

"Do you mean to say that you will have done with me altogether because of this?" he asks; "I have assured you that it is a thing over and done with."

"Your love for Olive over and done with—is that what you mean?"

"Yes," he says; but his voice quails as he utters the lie.

"Oh Philip, how can you tell me so? why do you say so when you must feel that I know better? Philip, I couldn't marry a man in whose face I'd seen such love for another woman as I saw just now in yours for Olive." Madge grows scarlet as she says this; but he well understands that it is not jealousy which is forcing the blood to her brow and cheeks. It is not jealousy; it is some far finer feeling.

"It costs you very little to turn down this page in the book of your life forever, apparently," he says, bitterly.

"No; it costs me more than it will you, Philip," she says, frankly; "even now I'm tingling with a foreshadowing of the mortification and humiliation I shall feel when this gets known; and all my friends will wonder, and surmise, and so stab me unhappily. But may I say something to you that's very personal? though the page we've read together is turned down forever?"

He nods consent, still moodily sitting there in front of her; and now the girl grows very earnest.

"Philip, work for Olive; prove to every body that you're as worthy of her at last as you've been faithful in your heart all along. I shall feel so proud of you when you have won a place, and can claim Olive, and I can turn round on every body and say this is the girl he loved from the first, and this is the woman he has married, and both he and she are very dear friends of mine."

For an answer to this Philip rises up, and says,

"By Jove! there is no hope for me with you again; good-bye, Madge; whatever I do in the world, whether it's good or bad, I shall feel, at least, that you wished me to do what was well."

Then they shake hands; such a long, hearty hand-clasp it is. And, somehow (so inconsistent are all human beings), this moment of parting is a bitter one to them both.

Other eyes than Madge's notice the discomfort which is painted on his face, which is legibly expressed in his gait and bearing. And, one and all, they misjudge Madge, and say,

"It has been too much for her. I knew she would not be patient any longer, now that he has killed her mare."

Madge is still sitting in that chair fronting the sofa, when Mrs. Henderson comes in presently with some fluid specially suited to invalids, in a tea-cup. Rather to Mrs. Henderson's surprise (and this lady has had considerable experience), Madge is neither in tears nor in a passion. She seems absorbed in thought, but raises herself readily enough, and actually broaches the topic herself.

"Did you see Philip as he went out?"

"Yes, I did," Mrs. Henderson says, "but not to speak to him. Madge, my darling, what has happened? is anything wrong?"

"I think something will be right, at last, that has been wrong for a long time," Madge says, with a certain enthusiasm. "All that has actually happened is this: Philip and I are not going to be married."

This announcement is a shock to Mrs. Henderson, although she has come in prepared to hear tidings of an abnormal nature. It is always rather shocking to hear for the first time of the dissolution of such a partnership as Philip and Madge had announced themselves as about to enter into. For a moment or two she can not tell whether she is glad or sorry. It is so utterly unlike any thing that she has hitherto believed Madge to be capable of—this disannulling of a bond—that she is more surprised than anything else.

Eventually she finds words to say,

"Your doing or his, dear?"

"Neither of us," Madge says, promptly; "it did itself. You will know all there is to know before very long; and now, dear, will you go and tell Aunt Lucy, and let us get home?"

Madge has grown pale through very earnestness while making this appeal, and so, in a half-sympathetic, half-perplexed spirit, Mrs. Henderson obeys her, and goes to Aunt Lucy.

"Don't be agitated," she begins, "but I must tell you that something very unforeseen has occurred between Madge and Philip."

"Have they—they haven't quarreled?" Aunt Lucy gasps, when Mrs. Henderson has brought her halting statement to a conclusion. "Dear! dear! that it should have come to this!" And Aunt Lucy proceeds to drop a few silent tears over something or other, she is not quite sure what.

"Has she broken it off with the young man because of the fatal accident to her Brunette?" Aunt Lucy asks, with mysterious confidentialness, presently. Philip has sunk into a mere "young man" again in her estimation, now that he is no longer to be looked upon as linked to Madge.

"She says she didn't break it off," Mrs. Henderson says, dubiously; "but—"
"But you don't mean to say he has jilted her?" Aunt Lucy cries out, in that holy wrath which is apt to inflame the breast of women when any one dear to them is accused of being put in the position of the 'left.' "Oh, you don't mean to say he has jilted her?" she repeats, wailingly. And then she picks up heart of grace and adds, witheringly,

"Well, better so, than that she should have been linked for life to scum of the earth that goes about without proper introductions."

Mrs. Henderson feels that this is a cut at her for having accepted Philip so readily. But she is not in a mood to resent such cuts now. Her own bitter consciousness of aptitude for being used as a tool is upon her to the extent of exorcising every particle of pride. All she says in reply, therefore, is,

"Better so, better so—yes a thousand times; but, dear Miss Roden, there has been a contest, and we shall never know who gave the sharpest strokes; only this—how shall I word it? Madge is not wounded in the way you fear."

Miss Roden questions and cross-questions, and Mrs. Henderson replies and explains as well as she is able to. But they neither of them come to a clearer understanding of the case than this—namely, that the marriage between Philip Fletcher and Madge Roden is broken off. The girl who so quietly and interestedly superintends the packing operations presently, does not look like a jilted woman. And yet! she has avowed that she did not "do it," but that it "did itself," which is the verbal refuge jilted women generally take.

There was a very good parting this same day between the strange mistress of the manor and the girl who had been her guest. The old lady, too, had witnessed the manner of Philip's exit from the place where he had been wont to come and play the part of "young lord-lover." And something in it recalled to her mind an incident of the days when she, too, "was very young and fair."

"My dear," she whispers, giving Madge's hand a final farewell grip, "I had a trouble when I was young, and it went here" (and she touches her forehead lightly as she speaks).

"Mr. Graves wasn't the man I wished to marry when I cared for any of the good that a real marriage means. I made my mistake at the last, my dear—you've got over yours at first; you'll end your life with something better than a dumb animal to love."

And with this prophecy ringing in her ears, Madge departs from the place to which she had come with Phil so many weeks ago—from the place in which Fate has commanded that the bond be broken which existed between Phil's cousin and herself.

There is supreme difficulty to the girl in taking up the links of the old life at home again. The old life! do I say? She can never live that again. She has had her lover and her experiences; and her experiences remain with her though she has lost her lover. Remain with her, and disable her for the old life of childish pleasure in the scenes and the people she has known from her childhood; disable her for the old, absorbing enjoyment in the quiet, girlish pursuits—in the peaceful, uninteresting Halsworthy routine. So much has happened since that day when she rode away so blithely on Brunette with Phil by her side, that she can hardly believe that she is the same girl.

Nevertheless she makes an effort to be the same, or, at any rate, to do the same things as of old. She resumes her part of young Lady Bountiful in the parish. She again organizes croquet parties, and Mrs. Henderson is more to her than ever, and is more sought by her than ever. But even to this dear friend Madge says very little about Philip, and nothing about the real cause of the rupture. She confesses to taking the keenest interest in him still; and when she does mention him, does so in a hearty, genial way that upsets the theory of her heart being hurt, or of hate having taken the part of love. She even avers one day that she "is longing to hear from Philip; that she thinks Philip unkind and thoughtless in not writing to her."

She says this in a passion of vexation to her aunt one morning when a budget of letters have been turned out from the post-bag; and her aunt is filled with bewilderment on the spot. Aunt Lucy has no precedents of her own to go upon, but she "knows what is right" under such painful circumstances.

"My dear," she says, kindly, "is it wise of you to permit yourself to hanker after anyone—even the most distant—intercourse with Mr. Philip Fletcher any longer?"

"I don't know about its being wise," Madge says, "but it's natural, surely; at any rate, I do long to hear from him; I'm always hoping and expecting that Philip will write and tell me that he has done something that will make us all very happy again."

"You don't mean to tell me," Aunt Lucy says, as fast as she can, but with her utterance considerably impeded by her indignation, "you don't mean to tell me that, after all, you would accept him again, Madge."

There is supreme comfort and reassurance to the old lady in Madge's stare of unfeigned surprise at such a supposition. There is almost joy to Aunt Lucy in the definite "No" which follows it. And yet with it all there is a sort of vexation that Madge should puzzle her so completely.

"If you can feel such surprise at the mere idea entering my mind," she says, stiffly, "you ought not to wish to hear from the poor young man; intercourse which—may—be—spoil to you may be death to him."

At this suggestion Madge smiles sadly. There is something touching to her in the idea of any one supposing there can be "death," or even "pain," to Olive Aveland's passionate lover in intercourse with herself, Madge Roden.
But a sense of respect for her aunt causes her to offer this meagre explanation.

"You'll understand why I'm longing to hear from him by-and-by, when he does what I hope and expect he will do; and oh dear, I hope he won't be long about it, for I do sadly want a change."

"What can she mean by it?" Miss Roden asks of Mrs. Henderson, after giving that lady the heads of this conversation. And Mrs. Henderson has to confess herself as ignorant of her young friend's meaning as is her interlocutor.

Madge has written a frank, loving letter to Olive, conjuring the latter to "come and stay at Moorridge House as companion, friend—any thing she likes. You may call yourself my governess, and teach poor ignorant me any one of the dozens of things you know, you proud, independent thing—only come; I should be happier, and so would you be, for we love each other, Olive. I am lonely very often. Philip Fletcher and I have broken off our engagement. He never loved me one bit; but we shall always be friends, and when he is the husband of the girl he loves I shall be fonder of him than ever."

"There," says sagacious Madge, as she indites this paragraph, "that will prepare her for the offer he'll make her soon, and her mind will be easy about me; she will feel that I know all about it, and am ready to say, 'bless ye, my children, when they're united.'"

This letter brings possibilities that she had believed to be buried out well before Olive again. It causes her heart to throb with a joyful hope to which that poor oft-tortured organ had been a stranger. It sends her down on her knees in a spasm of gratitude—in a feeble, hysterical burst of praise and thanksgiving, for that she has been mercifully preserved from marrying Griffiths Poynter in her despair. It sends her to Barr and Battle's show-room in such a glow of renewed vigor, and beauty, and hope, that she makes the room, which is dingy by reason of a thick fog which is reigning, almost glow. The air of rosy happiness which she diffuses illuminates the whole place, and places the mantles in such a burning light in the eyes of customers that she sells briskly this day, and does not loathe her occupation. For Philip is free, and he loves her.

She is singing in her heart all day. "He will return, I know him well," is the burden of her song. Her own Philip, her always-loyed Philip. "He had been true to himself and to her, and had confessed to Madge, and Madge had released him, like an angel as she was." This is the view Olive chooses to take of the blissful change which has come about. She almost dances as she goes hither and thither during her work. She almost hears the words, the tones, in which he will plead to put an end, at once and forever, to the separation which has lasted far too long already.

Perhaps there will be a letter awaiting her when she goes home this evening. Or perhaps he will be there himself awaiting her, anxious to set her heart and his own at rest without delay. Madge does not say how long it is since they have arrived at the clear understanding that has brought such bliss to Olive.

Higher and higher her heart soars into the realms of hope, as the door is opened promptly in answer to her knock, and her sympathetic landlady tells her, with a face all aglow with satisfaction, "that a gentleman is in the parlor—one you'll be glad to see, Miss." It does not occur to Olive that Philip is a stranger to the woman. "It must be he;" it never enters her head that it can be another. She bounds up stairs, flashing out thanks from her joyful eyes as she passes the landlady; she glances into the little parlor, and there, sitting dolefully by the low-burning fire, she sees Griffiths Poynter.

In the heat of her passionate disappointment she grows unjust and ungenerous. In the first pang of her pain she feels as if she must smite some one; and the first one who comes to her hand is the faithful, inoffensive fellow who would save her every pain if he could, at any cost to himself.

"Oh, is it only you! what did you come for?" she says; and then her overwrought spirit gives way, and she sits down and begins to cry; for she has not learned the lesson yet; she has not learned to distinguish the right man from the wrong; she can't make up her mind to "ring out the false, and ring in the true." And so she sits down and cries at Griffiths Poynter.

"Just as though he was hateful to her," he feels, and shows, by the angry, reproachful fire in her eyes, that finally burns away her tears, that she is not reigning.

"I have come to tell you something about an old friend of yours. I wouldn't have intruded upon you after—after what passed between us the last time we met, if I hadn't thought my news would justify my intrusion." He pauses, and she looks up inquisitively. She feels a conviction that it is something about Philip, though Grif knows nothing of Philip in connection with herself. She won't question him in words, but her eyes are full of inquiry, and he answers them at once.

"The news is from my part of the country. Madge Roden has been very ill! did you know it?"

"I heard from Madge this morning," Olive answers; "she tells me she has been ill; but she didn't make much of it."

"It's not her way to make much of anything unpleasant that happens to herself," Grif responds, loyally. "Did she tell you anything else?"

Olive knows well to what he refers now. But she does not dare to speak. The palpitation at her heart would cause her tones to tremble, and she shrinks from speaking of Philip in trembling tones to Griffiths Poynter. So she only turns a flushing face toward him, and he goes on gravely.
"Her engagement with that man—that Mr. Fletcher—is broken off: thank God."

"Thank Heaven!" Olive echoes, fervently. She has no further consideration for Griffiths. He has dared to disparage the man she loves. A faint gleaming of the truth flashes across Griffiths's mind. Then he looks at the girl, who seems to him to be much too exalted and noble a creature to care for any one so despicable as he firmly believes Philip to be. He scorns himself for having entertained the notion for an instant of Madge's recreant lover being dear to Olive Aveland. And so he executes another mistake.

"You feel as I do, glad of any thing, however painful at the time, which has brought this about; marriage with a fellow without an atom of principle to a girl like Madge——"

"How dare you come to me and say a word against Philip Fletcher!" she cries out, sharply; "how can you be so cruel and so coarse? whatever your jealousy may prompt you to think, how dare you say it to me?"

"Oh Olive!" he stammers out, overwhelmed with sorrow for the girl who is building upon such shifting sands—with sorrow for the girl, and pain for himself, that such a one as Philip should be preferred to him. "Oh Olive! is this the reason—"

"Don't, don't, don't," she whispers out, ashamed and abashed, now that she has declared herself in this way; "isn't it bad enough as it is, without my having to talk about it and explain; why did you sting me into saying what I did?" she asked, with a sudden stamp of her foot, like a petulant child, instead of the trouble-tamed woman she was; "why did you come here and torment me into proclaiming myself a fool? it wasn't kind, it wasn't honest, it wasn't manly—"

"Olive! treat me as a brother, and try to believe that as a brother would save you if you had one, so I will now, if you'll let me; yes, in any way, however it may hurt me."

He is desperately shocked at the open exhibition of her love for the man he believes to be a scoundrel; for he feels that she has been forced into making it by latent despair. But he forces himself to offer her his aid; and even if she bids him go and bring Philip from the nethermost ends of the earth, he would do her bidding. It is a blow to her enthusiasm, therefore, and he experiences altogether something like the sensation a shower-bath might give him, when Olive (feeling ashamed of herself the whole time) flashes at him with the words,

"Brotherly aid! what do you mean? Do you suppose I want you to go and hunt up Philip Fletcher, and ask him what his intentions are? I know them well enough, thank Heaven; I know that, now he has got his order of release, he will come back to me, and how happy I shall be at last!"

For one moment there is about her an air of irrepressible triumph. The next her head droops low, and she murmurs,

"Forgive me, Griffiths; and if you won't forget me altogether, forget me, at any rate, as I have been to-night."

"I can do nothing for you?" he asks, hesitatingly; "you and Mr. Fletcher understand each other."

She raises her eyes to his face, and dashes all hope from his heart. "Yes, we understand each other," she says, and shivers a little as she commits herself to the statement; for her fainting soul tells her that she may have affirmed too much.

And he accepts the statement in its full force without the smallest reservation, and goes out, presently, crushed and crestfallen, firmly believing that Olive will marry Philip Fletcher after a very brief delay, and that he will make her miserable. "At any rate," Griff thinks, humbly and mournfully, "I have no further right to intrude myself into her life; that is over."

There is no letter from Philip the following morning. But still Olive makes an effort to be as she was yesterday—to be as light of heart and foot. But the effort is beyond her. Toward the end of the day the elasticity goes from both, and it is a very springless Olive who eventually obeys a call to wait upon a specially hard-to-please customer.

The new-comer stands with her back to Olive as the latter comes up with a trimmed polonaise in hand. The lady is slender, graceful in figure, rather girlish and flighty in action, as she perpetually appeals to an old gentleman who stands by her side to indorse her opinion about different things. As Olive hears them they turn, and the old gentleman says, "Bless my soul, my dear child!" and the lady's blue eyes open wide, and Olive finds herself face to face with the Tollingtons.

With a sob and a gulp she lets her burden fall, and holds her hands out to her father's old friend. And at that moment Mrs. Tollington frisks toward some one who is coming into the show-room, and says,

"We won't keep you another moment, Mr. Fletcher. I'll choose my polonaise another day."

So she meets Philip again; and there is more than the bitterness of death in meeting him thus, in attendance on her fair foe and traducer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A VELVET PAV!"

"Oh don'task fifty questions of me all at once: my poor little head won't stand it," Mrs. Tollington pleads, shaking her fair hair, and fluttering, in her uncertainty, as to whether she shall assume the volatile, or the youthfully diffident and bewildered, air. "How can I tell you 'what it all means' in a minute? Olive? why don't you try and explain to Admiral Tollington—if you can—how you come to be here?"
The delicate blonde woman is quite herself as she utters this last sentence. She ceases the assumption of either the volatile or the youthfully diffident air. She is quite the spiteful elder woman, jealous of the way in which the younger fairer one has concentrated the interest of the two men upon herself in an instant.

"It would be difficult for me to explain why I'm here," Olive answers, bending her brows severely enough on her smiling face. Then, with a change of expression as she resolves, "No, I won't tell him; fool as she is, she is his wife, and he was my father's friend," she says aloud.

"I am happy enough here—try to believe that; I haven't patience enough to be a governess."

Admiral Tollington watches her keenly and shakes his head. "I don't understand it," he says, with a sigh; and then Philip pushes nearer, and says to Olive,

"Won't you speak to me, Miss Aveland? have I quite faded from your mind?"

He endeavors to say this in a semi-playful way, and Mrs. Tollington suspects him vaguely, and Olive despises him for it. How can he pretend to be any other than he is to her, whoever may be standing by? What are these Tollingtons to him that he should address her as "Miss Aveland," and affect the airs of a mere every-day acquaintance. She looks him steadily in the face, and he flashes an imploring glance at her from between those lashes which so often curtail his real feelings; and she lets him take her hand.

"How should I forget you?" she asks, simply; and Mrs. Tollington gives a bitter little laugh.

"You have yet to learn, Mr. Fletcher, that Miss Aveland takes every thing seriously; she always thinks more is meant than is said."

"My dear, where are you living?" Admiral Tollington asks. "I shall come and see you, and hear from you—"

"An elucidation of these mysteries," his wife interrupts. Then she passes out of the room with a bow, almost compelling her husband to go with her by placing her hand on his arm. And Olive stands back, proudly and angrily refusing to notice the hand which Admiral Tollington stretches out to her in passing.

In spite of the commandment, backward glance which Mrs. Tollington gives him, Philip lingers to say,

"Olive! say you're glad to see me."

"Why are you with that woman—that woman who was so cruel and insulting to me?" she says, chokingly.

"He's such a nice old fellow," Philip pleads, "such a thoroughly honest, good old fellow. I'd drop her fast enough, but I like him too well."

Olive's head gives an impatient twitch.

"How long has he been home?"

"A week or ten days," Philip says, getting red; "he will be a good friend to us both," he adds. And then he tells Olive she will hear from him soon, clasps her hand once more, and follows his friends.

How bitter the girl is all the rest of that day. How she loathes herself—how she despises that element of fidelity in her nature which makes her cling to this debilitated hope that Philip will be true to her after all. But she can't help it. It is the strongest element in her nature; it is the master-passion of her life! If it were not, how happy and prosperous, and altogether successful, she might be.

It is her destiny to lose the worthy and love the unworthy, and seek to blind herself, and fail in doing so. And in this failure is the sting; for if she believed in Philip as thoroughly as she loves him, she would be the happiest woman in the world this night, instead of one of the saddest.

It is altogether unimportant, of course it is altogether unimportant, yet Olive tortures herself with futile conjectures as to why he "was with the Tollingtons." In her helpless, blind jealousy against any one who keeps him from her, she is ready to accuse Admiral Tollington himself—her father's old friend—of being in league against her, of wishing to humiliate her, and generally to make her of no account. For he is "shorn of his strength by that nasty, affected Delilah," she thinks, angrily; and she hates Mrs. Tollington for her blonde locks and fair complexion, on which Time leaves no trace, and for her affected youthfulness, and for her apparent intimacy with Philip Fletcher. And in her solitude this night the memory of that meeting in the show-room rakes horribly, and she "has no friend to whom she can turn for solace and sympathy," she feels, in cruel forgetfulness of Griffiths Poynter, who is quite ready to bear the brunt of all her bitterness, provided she will rely on him as on a brother.

Meanwhile Philip is dining comfortably with the Tollingtons at the big, luxurious West-end hotel, where they are staying until it is settled at which port Admiral Tollington's flag shall be hoisted—dining with them comfortably, and speculating with considerable amusement as to the special form of absurdity which his hostess will bloom into when she is such an acknowledged power in a port as its Admiral's wife.

The gallant, good, kind old sailor has had a hint from head-quarters as to where his flag is to be unfurled, and, as may be supposed, he has given his wife a hint in turn. Accordingly, Mrs. Tollington speaks most unadvisedly about "When we go to Plymouth," and "When the Admiral and I give our first ball, I shall insist on your being at it." Philip accepts her invitations, which partake of the nature of a royal mandate, and despises her a little for "giving them in that way to a fellow who doesn't care for her," and dislikes her more than a little for having wounded Olive, his Olive!

A dozen packages arrive from a dozen different shops; for Mrs. Tollington is quite de-
terminated to hoist her flag with much splendor and pomp. In imagination she sees and hears people "taking her for Admiral Tollington's daughter," and she frames many prettily-worded sentences, by means of which to undeceive them. "Youth and I parted when I married, and how any one can take me for Admiral Tollington's daughter now I can't imagine," is one of her pet phrases. But all the while she says it she tries to look seventeen, and flatters herself that she succeeds in doing so.

The new and brilliant plumage in which she is going to preen herself for her flight into the new fields claims her attention now, and so the two men are left to themselves. As her dress rustles richly out of sight, Admiral Tollington dashes right into the heart of the matter which is interesting them both.

"Why did Miss Aveland leave my wife?" he says. "I see you know!"

The impulse to tell the truth is upon Philip for an instant, but only for an instant. Then he checks it, as is his wont. He assails his conscience for so doing by telling himself that it is morally wrong to make ill feeling between man and wife. Further, he tells himself that he does not know what really transpired when Olive left Mrs. Tollington's house in a rage.

"Olive's temperament is always warm," he reminds himself, "and women always exaggerate matters of feeling. On the whole!"—Well, on the whole, he resolves to be strictly non-committal. It would be inexcusable on his part to make poor old Tollington uncomfortable, and Mrs. Tollington is really a very nice little woman. So he says,

"Miss Aveland is a very reserved girl, I think; and I understood at the time from Mrs. Tollington that the want of confidence in her on Miss Aveland's part distressed her; but I really know or remember very little about it."

"Do you think" (and now Admiral Tollington fixes a keener gaze than he has fixed before on the open and ingenuous countenance of his wife's new friend, that "charming Mr. Fletcher who had saved her life"), "do you think that there is any love-affair at the bottom of it? do you think any fellow has been playing fast and loose with Olive Aveland?"

He pushes the wine with some vehemence toward Philip as he asks this, and Philip nonchalantly fills his glass before he replies,

"I can't fancy any fellow being such a fool."

"Neither can I, sir; neither can I," the old sailor says, lashing himself into wrath at the bare supposition; "but something has gone wrong with Olive Aveland, and I'll find out what it is, and who it is; and the doer of it shall not go unpunished, though her father is dead."

Philip bows his head approvingly. The sentiment pleases him very well, for he likes to feel that Olive—Olive who loves him with such utter devotion—is properly appreciated by other people. He feels quite certain, too, that no unpleasant results to himself will attend Admiral Tollington's investigation. For Olive will be staunch, Olive will never betray him, or witness against him in any way. He feels almost complacent about his own conduct when he considers how it has won him the unwavering fidelity of such a one as Olive Aveland.

Wrapt in his own meditations concerning the change in the child of his old friend, Admiral Tollington becomes silent and self-absorbed. Therefore it is an agreeable change, presently, to go into the drawing-room and have tea poured out for him by the fair hands of Mrs. Tollington. Philip feels. She tries to be winningly gushing to her husband; but his attention is given rather to the evening paper than to her. So presently she makes a sign to Philip, and he goes and takes a low chair by the side of her sofa.

"I want to ask you something as a friend who has your interest very much at heart," she begins, in a very low tone; and Philip supresses the laugh into which he is almost betrayed, and asks,

"What is it?"

"I could not bear to see you, the man who saved my life, fall a victim to any designing manoeuvre. Why did you stay behind when we came away from that shop to-day?"

"I staid to speak to Miss Aveland," he says, boldly, for it rather pleases him to see Mrs. Tollington grow flushed, and vexed, and confused, in her friendly eagerness to save him from every other woman's toils. A few soft words will always bring Mrs. Tollington round again, and the speaking of soft words to women does not at all overtask Philip Fletcher.

"I thought so, I feared so. Oh Mr. Fletcher, I shall speak to you as a sister might; I can't bear to think of you as trifling with any one; and still less can I bear to think that you have any serious intentions about Miss Aveland. I have an instinct against her—I've had it from the first;" and Mrs. Tollington tries to make a shudder, convulses her frame slightly as she finishes her sentence.

"Let us all talk of something pleasanter," the arch-hypocrite says; "let us talk of the laurels you will win as the Naval Queen of whatever port you're going to."

"Which means," she says, sharply, "let us leave Miss Aveland's name out of the conversation. Why are you so guarded about her? why can't you bear to hear me speak the truth about her?"

Mrs. Tollington has unconsciously raised her voice while asking these questions, and, to her annoyance, when she pauses for an answer, she sees her husband's eyes fixed upon her in undisguised amazement. Philip sees this too; but he is neither annoyed nor perplexed. This is not the kind of thing that upsets Philip's equanimity.

"Ladies' instincts always amuse me," he
“But” about this young man; and he can’t resist the inclination to word his feeling.

“But he didn’t speak out about Miss Ave-

land in a straight-forward way; I overheard

your conversation with him, of course, my
dear; and, moreover, I had been questioning

him concerning the cause of her cutting her-

self adrift from you in the way she did. I fanci-
ed he knew something about it; and now I’m

sure.”

“Are you?” Mrs. Tollington says, faintly;

“why—how?”

“He knows all about it,” Admiral Tollin-
tong persisting, clinging to the portion of the sub-
ject that is most interesting to himself, as it

concerns Olive, and disregarding his wife’s

question. “He knows all about it; and he’s

too much of a sea-lawyer to answer me plainly;
so, my dear, I must come to you for all the

information you can give me about that poor

child, whose father was as good a seaman and

gallant an officer as ever trod the quarter-

deck. Many’s the boat action and cutting-

out expedition that poor Ave and I have been

in together,” Admiral Tollington continues,

with a lapse into the tenderly reminiscent

frame of mind that leaves him unprotected, and

shows Mrs. Tollington where the weak places

are in his armor.

“Do tell me about some of those exploits,”
she says, rousing herself up, and leaning on her

elbow, and making her eyes sparkle with enthu-

siasm. “I have always been half crazy about naval adventures and anecdotes; I used

to worry papa dreadfully to get him to tell me

about the storms and engagements he had been

in. Do you know papa got fifteen awful

wounds in one action—a boat action I think it

was—thirteen on one leg, and four on his back

and shoulders, and two frightful ones on his

head—”

“That makes nineteen! you said fifteen,”

Admiral Tollington interrupts. He is inter-

ested in the story of the mutilated condition of

Mrs. Tollington’s papa; but, above all things,

he likes accuracy when dealing with facts!

“I made a mistake—it was nineteen,” Mrs.

Tollington replies, promptly. “How he lived

through it was a marvel to every one; the

doctors said his tenacity of life was surpris-

ing.”

“What was it in?” Admiral Tollington asks,

paying the fair biographer the compliment of taking off his glasses, and settling him-

self near the fire to listen comfortably.

“Oh, a boat action!”

“But where?”

“Somewhere off the North American sta-
tion,” Mrs. Tollington answers, yawning. She

has turned the edge of the sword—her admiral

has forgotten Philip and Olive, and so her na-

val enthusiasm is waning fast.

“Never mind, never mind,” Admiral Tol-

lington says, complacently, nodding his head;

“I’ll look it out in ‘James’s Naval History’
to-morrow; probably there is an honorable
mention made of such an affair as that. I'll make an extract of it for you, my dear."

For a moment Mrs. Tollington permits herself to feel furious with her painstaking, practical spouse. Why will he persist in tracing things to their sources? "It's utterly impossible," she feels, "to talk civilly and gracefully to a man who will have every lightly-mentioned detail authenticated. But having involved herself in a web, it behooves her to wriggle out of it; so she says,

"I dare say I have made more of it than it actually was—blundered, in some way or other. I was always so enthusiastic and imaginative that poor papa couldn't recognize his own stories, very often, when I told them back to him again. So I won't be disappointed, dear, if you don't bring me a very gratifying extract from 'James's History,' after all; but do tell me some of your own escapes and adventures, I want to know all that you've ever done: I'm not one of the fashionably-cold, indifferent wives, dear, who know little and care less about the means by which their husbands have won distinction: tell me."

So she purrs upon him, making him believe that she is hungering to hear how he has fought, won, and made a name she is proud of.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISS WESTCOTT INTERVENES.

The sun rises upon the first day of the "Winstaple week;" and the Winstaple week is a period from which men date events in this border-land district. Two balls are given in it. The hunt ball, which is good, and the county ball, which is better, the privileged say, because it is so hedged in with patrician traditions and rules and regulations, that all respectable people who are not "county people" are miserable at it.

These balls belong rather to the order of Old-World festivities. The potencies of the land drive in from long distances, and put up for two or three days at one or other of the ancient inns of the place, where they are treated to rather more ceremonial, and regarded with rather more outward awe, than falls to the lot of crowned heads traveling through the bustling haunts of men nowadays.

The hunt ball is by far the gayer affair of the two, for it falls on the night of the day of the best meet of the season, and nearly the whole of the crowded field attend the ball at night. And they are all in most sportsman-like and justifiable high spirits, for the run has been a tremendous one, and one of the monarchs of Exmoor held out till he reached the very heart of Winstaple, where he died like a king facing his foes. The prettiest Miss Westcott has the honor of being mentioned as the only lady out who rode well up the whole day, and was in at the death, after all. Ardent admirers of the chase are very much at the feet of this young Diana to-night. They are in ecstasies about her pluck and her prowess. "It would have been nothing if it had been a quick thing," they say; "but it had been any thing but a 'quick thing,'" and yet she and her horse came up fresh and full of anxiety at the finish. It is a full and sufficient proof that she knows what she is about in the saddle, and "doesn't go fooling about, and bucketing her horse to pieces for a show-off."

The fresh, fair, handsome, light-haired girl is the Queen of the Revels indisputably. In spite of the severe run through the biting air, she does not seem one whit fatigued, but is leaping through every round dance like a young leopardess. And her favorite and most frequent partner is Phil Fletcher—her cousin Ronald's tutor.

There is no guile about Miss Westcott, and unquestionably there is nothing secretive nor underhand. She tells Phil that she "likes dancing with him better than any of the rest," so openly and earnestly that Sir Galashad himself could have done no other than Phil does—namely, ask her again and again. The goddess of the chase doesn't mind his absorbed silence in the least. How can he talk, poor fellow, when all his attention is given to the grand entrance door through which it is possible Madge Roden may enter at any moment.

His good-tempered young partner takes a hearty interest in life all round, and so, though she hasn't the slightest objection to Phil's silence, she wonders at the unwonted taciturnity, and can't help noticing the direction his eyes take perpetually. Presently she indicates a spot into which she desires to be propelled, in order to recover the breath which has ebbed away to the strains of the La belle Heléne Waltz. As Fate wills it, this spot is near the door.

Certainly a handsome, striking girl is Miss Westcott. Rather redundant, perhaps, but not too much so for a big ball-room. Her bright crépe hair would look tangled and untidy, probably, if things about her were on a smaller scale. But as it is; fluffiness and puffiness predominate, and her hair only strikes one as being the most luxuriant in the room. Altogether, with her bright, laughing, upturned face, her tall, full figure, and that irrepressible air of hers, which is as natural to her as shining is to the sun, she is a very prominent figure in the ever-changing view of the ball-room. And the man who is most frequently by her side is handsome and distinguished.

"Are you looking for any one, Phil?" she asks, presently, when her breath has come back sufficiently to enable her to articulate. "Are you anxious about Ronald? My sister is keeping him out of mischief."

"I think when this waltz is over I'll look him up though," Phil answers; "a hunt dinner, and a hunt dance—"

"To say nothing of so many pretty faces,
may prove too much for Master Ronald's head, mayn't they?" she interrupts, laughingly.

"What would my august aunt say if Ronald fell in love with some pretty unknown here tonight? she'd expire if she thought my sister indulged his boyish propensity to flirt; but if he married beneath him!—oh! poor Phil! you'd have a time of it."

Miss Westcott laughs out in genuine enjoyment of her own conceit as she says this, and in her exuberance of spirit places her hand on Phil's shoulder, and gives the signal for one more round, and they go off together, a handsome, much-observed pair.

She calls him "Phil" in mere thoughtlessness, as girls do so many things which they had better leave undone; and though he has never wished her to do it, it can not be said that he actually dislikes it, for it drops with most friendly, and "nothing more," naturalness from Miss Westcott's tongue. So they swing round together, her draperies swirling out in the unflattering way that tells one that the "waltzers are waltzing in time," and with the same look of "zest" about her with which she had followed the hounds the whole day. And uninterested people look at them, and think "they're a fine-looking pair," and that is all.

But one interested person, who has come into the room just before this pair started from the door-way, just in time to hear that last sentence of the young lady's, "poor Phil! you'd have a time of it," stands still, heart-smitten at once, though she knows it not herself, by the words and the sight.

To other people Phil and Miss Westcott are a pair of ordinary good-looking mortals; and that they should dance a great deal together, and that the girl should call him "Phil," are matters of very little moment to any body. But to this new-comer they mean so much! Madge Roden feels instinctively that the large blonde with ruffled hair—who addresses him familiarly by his Christian name—is the special Miss Westcott at whose feet Philip affirmed his cousin to be—the same whose clever riding today is the theme of the hour.

Miss Roden, senior, and the Hendersons are close by her, and Madge can't help wondering whether or not they heard the words that will go on ringing in her ears—whether or not they are noticing the air of intimacy which is the only thing she sees in this brilliantly-lighted room? Before she can solve these doubts a variety of men are undulating before her, programmes and pencils in hand, and Madge has pledged herself for all the best dances before she realizes that by so doing she has cut herself off from all chances of having a few quiet words with Phil.

The waltz ends, and the waltzers either patrol solemnly well in view of their seniors, or vanish into some kindly obscurity, where every whispered word is not noticed and commented upon by the many who have had their day, and are grievously pained to see others having it. We who are in the sccar, we who are waning, can well understand the feeling, and ought to be lenient to it. All the glory of a "ball" is over for a woman when men no longer jostle one another in their haste to secure her for so many dances. There comes, indeed, later on, a time of fuller and more perfect triumph than we could ever have known in our self-absorbed youth; and that is when our daughters take the field!

Madge is sitting down; her dress—a French combination of blue velvet and blue tulle (composed in such a way that beholders wonder that they haven't always thought "velvet proper ball-room wear for a girl")—half concealed by the ampler trains of laces of her aunt and Mrs. Henderson, who are on either side of her—her face wholly concealed by the rather massive figure of the member for the division of the county, who is to be her partner in the ensuing gallop. But though she can not be seen, she can see—and hear!

Distinct from the tramp of the multitude, she hears one voice; and she loses the whole gist of an intelligent remark that the aforesaid member is making to her, in her anxiety to hear what that voice says.

"I shall try to get Ronald away when I've found your mamma for you; the long run and this hot room have been too much for the boy's head."

"Nonsense!" the Diana of the day responds promptly; "the boy's head isn't worth thinking about if it can't stand a long run and a hot room; look at me."

Phil laughs, and utters some meaningless, semi-gallant words, that are accepted by the girl herself, and by uninterested listeners around her, as Society's small verbal change. But they are not so accepted by Madge. Phil has found his fate in this big, rather boisterous blonde! She is sure of it; and so she makes a struggle to magnanimously consider Miss Westcott "a very fine, handsome girl."

Simultaneously, she perceives that Mrs. Henderson and Phil have recognized one another, and that Phil is advancing to speak to that lady. The next moment Madge is shaking hands with him herself, and the next she is whisked off by her partner, for the gallop has begun; and then, as Miss Westcott is claimed and carried off, Phil forgets his anxiety about his pupil, and places himself between Aunt Lucy and Mrs. Henderson.

The memories of her parting scene, and her parting injunctions to the young fellow, are very present with Mrs. Henderson as he sits down and asks her eagerly for "news." She knows what he wants to hear. She knows that the rumor of the breaking off of Madge's engagement has gone abroad, and that he is asking to have it verified. But she has scorch'd her fingers once, and she will be very chary how she fans love-flames for the future.

But she answers him very gently,
"News! My dear boy, if I gave you my news what a bore you would think me! it would be all about the village joys, and woes, and clubs. Tell me news, rather; tell me about your mother and sisters."

"They are quite well," he answers, cooly, for he considers that she is repelling him unjustly. So he turns to Aunt Lucy.

"How well Miss Roden is looking," he says.

"Yes," Aunt Lucy answers, hurriedly, thinking of the fever this young man’s imprudence brought upon her beloved niece, and wishing, with all her heart, that there were no young men in the world to upset existing and agreeable arrangements. "Yes, poor dear child; she was sadly shattered by that terrible affair, and it will leave its traces on her for life, I fear;" and Aunt Lucy gathers her garments more closely about her, and fans herself vigorously, as though she would put the remains of the fever to flight by that means. And Phil feels strangely downcast; for he thinks that the terrible affair to which Aunt Lucy alludes with such irlie impatience is the breaking off of the engagement with his cousin.

"But it’s past and over now," Mrs. Henderson puts in, kindly, for she too is thinking of Madge’s illness, "and we’ll agree never to speak of it again. Who is that fine-looking girl you were dancing with when we came in, Phil?"

"Miss Westcott, the cousin of my pupil."

"Oh!" Mrs. Henderson says her "Oh!" so significantly that Philip blushes with annoyance, as he feels that Mrs. Henderson is thinking what is not the case. Before he can master this annoyance, and say something coolly critical about Miss Westcott that shall undeceive his hearers, the gallop comes to a clattering end, and Madge is restored to her place.

Now is his time, and he seizes it. He pleads with an eagerness he can’t subdue for the next dance—for any—for one at least. And Madge has to shake her head, and declare herself engaged for all.

He looks round hopelessly, wondering whether any one of the men who have so unwarrantably stolen a march on him will have the decent feeling to renounce her to him. And Madge meanwhile looks down and plays with her programme as it dangles from her fan, and wonders whether or not Phil will "arrange it" with some one to whom a dance with her will be but as water unto wine, compared to what it will be to Phil.

But he does not read the truth in her face, and so the opportunity slips, as does many a prized one from us all in life, and Madge gets into a vortex of other men; and for all the good Phil gains from her society, he might have staid away from the hunt ball this night.

But there comes a moment when an unwary man leaves her on a fruitless errand after her cloak, in which she wants to wrap herself as she proceeds down to supper. And in that moment Phil is by her side.

"I want to hear you say that you forgive me every thing that happened the last time I saw you," he says, eagerly; "and I want you to tell me if the friendship I so proudly thought I had gained then is to be withdrawn from me altogether now."

"I have nothing to forgive—if I had, I’d do it; and as for the rest, every thing is altered, you know; and so, perhaps, we had better not try to go on building up, when the very foundation of what we built upon is broken down."

She hardly knows why she says this. She is only certain that she wishes him to know that Philip and herself have severed their bonds, and that she will not hastily form another bond, even of friendship. So she dispirits and unwittingly deceives him.

Still he follows her down, and gets close to her at supper, and is preparing to try to touch once more the old spring of interest in himself—to wake the chords that have made the only music of his life, when Miss Westcott and a boy partner, who bores her, take up a position next to him.

Miss Westcott is really "fond of Phil Fletcher." She would use these very words in speaking of him to any one, use them openly, and believe in very truth that they exactly expressed her unsentimental regard for him. We know so little of ourselves, even the most self-analytically disposed of us.

She is frank to a fault, this boisterous young being with the blonde hair, and so now, directly she finds herself next to Phil, who never bores her, she audibly expresses her delight, for she will be able to get away from the boy who does. And Madge listens to the effusive words that bespeak such well-grounded intimacy, and that so softly confirm the statement Philip had made about his cousin being awfully gone on one of these girls. Listens, and lets the scorn in her heart for the facility with which people love and unlove, and for the flickleness of herself and others, display itself in her averted face and her cool manner.

"I know you wouldn’t go, Phil," Miss Westcott begins; "I felt sure of you for the after-supper round dances; they’re always the best, and we always belong to each other for them; don’t we?"

Madge tinges. She does not know that this remark is made by Miss Westcott for the purpose of ridding herself for the rest of the night of her youthful attaché, in whose mind call-love had just developed the knowledge that he is, as his sisters have often told him, "but an awkward hobbledehoy. Poor fellow! He too has his strictly private miseries, even as he stands here smiling the uneasy loose kind of smile, that will not limit itself, of indecision and awkwardness. He has suddenly become conscious of so many things of which he had been happily oblivious. He knows that he has nothing to say for himself—nothing, that is, that a girl can care to hear; he knows that the line of scarlet flesh between his cuff and his
glove, which won't keep buttoned, is a hideous thing in woman's eyes. He knows that when he flops about in a gallop, or conducts himself like a surging wave in a waltz, that his partner must think him a mere bungling boy. He could almost have cried just now when he found himself panting, and heard himself puffing, after two sharp rounds, at the end of which Diana's breathing powers were in as perfect order as when they started. He is nineteen, and Ronald Westcott is only nineteen, but Miss Westcott's young adorer knows well that neither she nor any other woman would venture to treat Ronald with the mixture of familiarity and unconcern with which they treat himself. He can't understand it, and he is miserable, even as he stands bearing the burden of Miss Westcott's fan and bouquet (he has sent her the bouquet himself), and handkerchief, and wine-glass, while that young being calmly disposes of her mayonnaise and gives all her attention to Phil Fletcher.

Presently Madge feels that Miss Westcott is whispering to Phil. She can not hear a word; she would not hear a word if she could. But she is annoyed at the mere fact; and it must be conceded that she is unwarrantably annoyed, for has she not done her best to chill him off to-night?

"Who's the pretty girl in blue?" Miss Westcott asks—"bewitching dress, too; how well it would suit me!" Not the least of the young Diana's charms is her open and undisguised pleasure in her own appearance. You can not call it vanity.

"It is Miss Roden," Phil mutters, fervently hoping that Madge will not hear him.

"Oh! the one who was engaged to your cousin; a shame to have broken with such a nice fellow;" and now she addresses the youthful victim of her bow and spear aloud, "Mr. Mervyn, may I ask you to go and see where mamma is? I won't wander about in search of her till I know exactly where she is."

He feebly shakes his chains. "Shall I find you here again if I do go?"

"Well yes, you'll find me if my partner has not claimed me," she says, blithely; and as he goes on her mission, she turns to Phil, and laughs out unclosedly.

"Under the circumstances, I don't suppose it will be very shocking if I ask you to take a turn or two with me, Phil. I can't stand that boy any longer." And she rises as she says it, and Phil is obliged to go off with her, without another word from Madge, without even a look.

The circumstances to which Miss Westcott had so carelessly referred are simply these: that he has been living in her father's house for many weeks; that they are as intimate as brother and sister; and that they dance together nearly every night. But Madge feels sure that by "under the circumstances" "that overpowering girl" means their engagement. And the glory of the ball is gone.

She goes rather languidly through the rest of her engagements, but still she finds greater pleasure—not not pleasure, but greater peace—in dancing than in sitting down; for she is shrinkingly afraid of the remarks that may fall from Aunt Lucy and Mrs. Henderson. Everything connected with the one subject has stood out in such vivid colors before Madge this night, that she thinks the others must have seen it also. Naturally she has no admiration left for Miss Westcott. But she could ill bear to hear Phil's choice criticised by those two friends of hers.

At length she makes the very young lady-like plea to her partner of requiring change of air, and indicates a wish to go out into one of the bench-lined corridors and sit down, out of the whirl. She feels that she may do this with impunity, for her partner is that same Mr. Mervyn who is wearing his heart upon his sleeve for Miss Westcott. Madge knows well that there will be no trouble with him. She has not "ridden to hounds all day, and come as fresh as paint to the ball to-night," as he enthusiastically describes Miss Westcott having done. And she is right. All his soul is with the young Diana of the day, though his body reposes upon the hard bench at Madge's side.

Presently she begs him "not to stay with her, but to get another partner and finish it." And this she does really in mercy to the boy, who keeps on craning his neck to look through the door-way at the gyrating form of his love's young dream. He obeys her with an obedient haste that he is heartily ashamed of, but that he is quite powerless to repress. The fact is, he has stimulated himself to the point of determining to "put it to the test" this night. His hand, heart, and possessions will be offered to Miss Westcott before the "lights are dead, the garlands shed," in the waxing light of day.

Wearily Madge sits there alone, her eyes fixed on the changing figures, but not seeing one of them. Suddenly the seat by her side is taken, and Phil Fletcher asks,

"I have watched for this moment to find you disengaged; do give me a turn."

"I have dismissed my partner on the plea of being too tired to dance any more," she says, evasively, and Phil lowers his head and pleads, "Not with me, as a proof to me that you haven't altogether ceased to take a little friendly interest in me?"

"Friendly interest! Under the circumstances, even that is impossible."

For an instant he harbors the delusion that the girl loved Philip too well to endure any communication with Philip's relations now. Then he banishes it, and is about to say something which shall prove to her, at least, that his interest in her is deeper than ever, when again Miss Westcott intervenes.

This time she comes flying up with real dismay on her face, and does not even see Madge.

"Dear Phil," she begins, "do come; Ronald has taken too much wine, I'm afraid, and he's
broken a big looking-glass; papa can't manage him.

It was true. Ronald and a big cavalry sword, with which he had been practicing a little harmless fencing, were the innocent means of deepening Madge's conviction of Phil being Miss Westcott's "dear Phil" in very truth.

"I will be back directly," are his parting words as he goes off in search of his charge; and even at the door he turns round and gives her a look that plainly entreats her to "wait for him."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"HOPE TELLS A FLATTERING TALE."

For three woefully expectant days Olive Aveland has endured the suspense—now she simply lives through it. All of us know the difference that exists between these two passive forms of misery, or, if we have not learned it already, we shall learn it by-and-by. But I believe that the last-named stage is, in reality, the stagnant period that must intervene before the death of any great suffering.

The fourth day dawns, and, as Olive wearily raises herself and prepares for the day, the wicked prayer is on her lips that she "may not live to see another." In that same moment she is helped and forgiven; for the prayer that she utters, which really comes from her heart, is that "she may live to know how wise it all is."

"Oh, happiness! our being's end and aim." What servile misery we all go through in seeking to make you our own familiar friend. And you shun us the more determinately, the more we pursue you, and force upon us the conviction that you are very much like the denizens of this wicked world, after all—never accessible to those who really need you.

No letter from Philip rests on her breakfast-table, throwing a halo over it. Her rather dry bread-and-butter nearly chokes her as she tries to begin that "crushing out" system which she has half-vowed to carry through. He is free, and he does not use his freedom to come near her. "If he does not seek me, I will not let my life be laid waste by thoughts of him any longer," she says in her heart, with fierce determination.

Weak, weak "as the first that fell of womankind," as she is, she does really make strong and earnest efforts, all this day, to forget that this man lives, corroding her life! She endeavors, with all her power of argument, to prove to herself that he is a commonplace character enough, selfish, and not too largely endowed with principle. She accepts the truth of the statements she makes to herself concerning him, and loves him just as well as if she disbelieved them all.

Olive, in short, belongs to that order of women—and it is not a small one, unfortunately—who do not fall in love with the good qualities of men. Women of this type detect the "one virtue" (overlaid as it may be by a thousand crimes), and justify their affection by it. Or they fail in detecting any virtue at all, and still love the poor sinner out of very pity.

As she goes into her lodgings this night, she tells herself that henceforth Philip's reign over her heart shall be a secret and unacknowledged one. He shall never have the satisfaction of feeling that he may leave her for any length of time and always be sure of a welcome when it pleases him to come. "Good-bye, my dear dead hope," she says; "I've not even you left to me in the world now." And as she so resigns herself, he comes across the room to her.

These three days, that have been so desperately long, and full of painful uncertainty to Olive, have been days of temptation and struggle to Philip. He knows what Olive does not realize—that it would be a greater cruelty, on his part, to marry her than to part with her at once and forever. He knows that poverty with a wife and children, however much he loved them, would brutalize him. And he knows that, being what he is, he has no reasonable hope of ever emerging out of poverty by his own exertions. Further, he knows that in the presence of the girl all this knowledge is likely to prove vain.

So, for three days, he has been struggling against his inclination to be soothed by a sight of the one being in the world to whom he is the first and the dearest. But a sight of her woebegone face, as she went to work this morning (he has waited for an hour each day to see her come out), has toppled down his resolution. And so behold him here at the eleventh hour! Here as her friend only, not as her lover.

He has sworn solemnly to himself that nothing shall tempt him to the injustice of being more than calmly friendly with Olive Aveland. He has some vain and feeble notion "that, in turn, her own good sense will tell her that it is folly for them never to see one another, and to be apparently at feud, though marriage is out of the question." He never pauses to consider, as he himself will not be injured by the arrangement, that it is one to ruin Olive, in people's estimation. There will be comfort to him in her society. What does it matter to Philip at what cost to the girl this comfort is purchased?

"I should have called on you before," he glibly and falsely explains, as soon as they have shaken hands coldly, "but I've been looking about to find employment." Then, as Olive vouchsafes no answer, does not even look at him, he goes on: "My prospects have altered very much since I saw you last; do you know in what way?"

She turns her face toward him now, and it is steadily as a rock as she says,

"I have heard from Madge Roden."

"Then you know that my engagement with her is broken off?"

"Yes," Olive says. "Why?"
She is hungering for him to say, "Because I love you, Olive." But he is a wise young man. Such a speech would mean a wedding-ring very soon; and, very soon after that, all the subterfuges, and woes, and petty miseries of a ten-pound householder. So he sagaciously does violence to his inclinations, which would lead him to make the very speech Olive is vainly imagining, and answers, instead,

"Miss Roden grew tired of me, I suppose."

The bitterness which he infuses into these words—for it is his present design to play the part of a jilted and consequently embittered lover—almost convinces Olive that they are true. She makes a great effort to be decently sorry for him, outwardly.

"I can hardly think that of Madge," she says, slowly; "she is such a faithful-hearted girl."

"It's mortifying to have to acknowledge it," Philip says, with a short, harsh laugh; "but I am obliged to believe that her heart had nothing to do with it from the first; it was habit and her friend Mrs. Henderson. It's a blow to a fellow," he goes on, appealing to Olive, "after it has gone on for so long."

She presses a ring cruelly into her finger to keep herself from crying out in her pain. It is intolerable that he should come to her and regret and lament another woman, even though that other woman is Madge. But there is nothing abject or reproachful in the way she says, presently,

"It is human, I suppose, to value a thing more highly when we have lost it; there was a time when you certainly did not duly prize Madge Roden or her love."

"Don't you reproach me for that, Olive," he cries, quickly. Then he feels that these words may be taken as the advanced guard of a whole regiment of "follies," if he does not neutralize their impression, and adds,

"To be perfectly candid with you" (how natural it is to distrust the veracity of words that are prefixed in this way), "I did not value what I have lost highly enough until I lost it; but I'm making up for that careless appreciation now. You mustn't be hard on me, Olive; I have a horrible feeling of isolation upon me; my own people have cooled considerably toward me of late, and, if they hadn't, I am not sufficiently pleased with my cousin Phil's conduct to risk meeting him. If it were not for the Tollingtons and—you," he says, hesitatingly, "I should be as solitary a fellow as there is in London."

Again there is silence on Olive's part. She is most profoundly perplexed by Philip's manner and his words. But, in the midst of her cruel perplexity, she stands fast to her determination to make no sign that shall show him she is still his to torture as he likes. That he will torture her horribly, she knows; but he shall not know it.

"Admiral Tollington is coming to see you," he presently jerks out; "how fond he seems of you, Olive."

A softer look—one of gratitude—gleams in Olive's eyes—poor, tear-stained eyes, that have been for many a long day set in circles of pain—and she says, warmly,

"I'm glad he is coming; I hope he won't bring that woman with him."

"Do you mean Mrs. Tollington?"

"Of course I mean Mrs. Tollington; Philip, I hate her!"

"She's a good little creature enough, too," he says, deprecatingly. "Frivolous and a little vain, perhaps, but not a person to call such a passion as hate into existence, any more than she is one to call such a passion as love into existence."

He throws this last sentence as a sop to the Cerberus of Olive's animus. Instead of being appeased by it, however, Olive is aggravated into saying,

"Love! don't speak of anything so holy as love! in connection with such a creature as that," and she lets go her lax hold of the slender rope of dignity in a moment. Then she checks herself, and adds, more moderately,

"I'm neither generous nor just, I know it very well, when that woman is my topic, Philip. She did not wrong and misjudge me through obtuseness and stupidity; she did it with low cunning and carefully regulated spite. But you're right; she is not a person to call such a passion as hate into existence. For the future I'll only despise her—as I don't despise any thing else on earth," she winds up, vehemently.

"She's not worth talking about," Philip is beginning, but Olive interrupts him by saying, calmly,

"Don't shelve the subject in that way; I should like it better if you said, 'Mrs. Tollington is a friend of mine, and I won't stay here and hear her abused.'"

"And you would take advantage of that rash threat, and would go on abusing her, in order to rid yourself of my society?" he questions, laughingly. "Oh yes! I know what women are."

"You know what women are!" she repeats, with infinite scorn—infinite, assumed scorn, that is, for her heart is melting to his looks and tones with ignominious speed. "You know what women are! do you really think you do? Why, you know nothing about them; you only understand shallow, puerile natures like Mrs. Tollington's."

She is so ashamed of herself for having fallen back upon this unworthy subject of dispute, that she hastens to create a diversion directly the words are out of her lips, by making tea and offering Philip some. But Philip is not like Griffiths Peynor, who would have swallowed boiling water if offered to him by her fair hand. Philip detests tea at the hour when civilized man should be dining. He reminds himself that the Tollingtons—that "hospitable little woman, who has given him a general invitation, and her husband"—will be sitting
down to a dinner that would be more appetizing to the lady certainly if partaken of in company with some one besides her legal lord. And he has risen and said "Good-evening" to Olive before he remembers that he dares not present himself, an unbidden guest, to the Tollingtons in morning dress. Still he goes, for there is nothing in Olive's manner to detain him.

He has not transgressed the prudent bounds of friendship. He has been undemonstrative, self-possessed, and perfectly kind in his manner toward her. On no pretext whatever can she, without open confession of disappointment, and consequent loss of dignity, forbid his again seeking her in this quiet, merely friendly way! She knows this well as he bids her good-bye, and promises "another call soon." She knows this well, and writres under the knowledge.

She sits for hours over her untasted tea, trying to take in the facts and to face them. It has come to this, she realizes. Philip takes a cool, mental pleasure in her society, and means to have it on serenely friendly terms. She is to be the sympathetic and intelligent repository of all his hopes, and fears, and struggles, and schemes. And she is obliged to accept the situation.

By-and-by, after she has looked at the subject from every side, a faint color flushes her face, corresponding to a faint flicker of hope in her heart. While he sees her often he will not care for any other woman! There is comfort in that thought, the only comfort left to her. And so she resigns herself to walking on the dubious neutral ground over which Philip has indicated that he intends leading her.

Days pass and lengthen into weeks, and Philip continues calling on her fitfully, and making himself and his poor prospects his chief topics. So far, these visits resemble the first one, each detail of which has been described. But they differ in some respects. A change is creepmg over Philip insensibly; for he does desire, above all things, to be prudent. But he finds it a more difficult task than he had at first imagined it to be, to be much with Olive without showing her that he loves her still.

The girl has schooled herself sharply, and never, by conscious look or word, does she attempt to break down the barrier he has created. But her heart swells with a stronger hope after each visit, as the possibility, which has been her blessing and her bane for so many years, presents itself more and more definitely. She knows—what Philip will not acknowledge to himself—that the firm ground he determined to stand upon is slipping from under his feet; that her presence is a trying temptation to him to relinquish the resolve he has made; and that, though he will not permit himself to utter a single soft word, every glance that he gives her is a message straight from his heart to hers.

His hand lingers longer and longer in giving the greeting and parting clasp. He defers to her opinion as to the way in which he shall go to work in trying to procure remunerative employment. And finally, he rushes to tell her of his first success with a return of all his old affectionate ardor, when he has secured the post of private secretary and amanuensis to Admiral Tollington.

The news cuts like a knife. All this time the Tollingtons have never been mentioned. Muteiy they had agreed, it seemed, after that one outbreak on Olive's part against Mrs. Tollington, to say nothing more about either the husband or wife. Secretly, Olive thought a great deal about her father's old friend, the frank, cordial, apparently kind-hearted man who had promised to come and see her, and had failed to keep his promise.

"We go down to Government House at to-morrow," Philip goes on explaining; "it's a good thing for a fellow with absolutely nothing of his own to start with, and, with old Tollington's interest, will lead to something better."

"What has kept—who has kept Admiral Tollington from coming to see me?" Olive asks, bluntly.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you! he has been out of town, up in Scotland, for some time. An uncle of his died lately, and left him a large property, a place called Auchtarroch, up in the Highlands; they only came back yesterday."

"Has she been with him?"

"To be sure she has," Philip laughs; "you don't suppose that our essentially feminine friend would miss the earliest opportunity of displaying herself as the chieftainess; she's absolutely magnificent now; began calling her husband 'Auchtarroch;' can't you fancy her?"

"I can fancy her making a fool of herself in any and every way," Olive says, calmly.

"She'll disappear from mortal sight in a blaze of glory soon," Philip says, with a burst of laughter at the expense of the fair being who has won him the appointment. "Old Tollington is to be knighted for the promptitude with which he resented something or other that was supposed to be an insult to the British flag. Olive, you must let me write to you constantly, if it's only to tell you how Lady Tollington handles her sceptre and wears her crown."

"You may write to me as often as you will, Philip," Olive says, with her eyes glistening; "but if you ever mention that woman, I'll burn your letter without reading it."

"I won't, then," he promises, cheerfully; "and you'll answer my letters?"

She is heartily ashamed of herself as she nods assent, and whispers, "Yes."

If any one despises Olive for these concessions which she makes, and considers her pusillanimous for her "Philip-at-any-price" conduct, let that person remember that the quality which is most highly prized in a woman is "fidelity," and this fidelity was the strongest element in Olive's nature.

He takes leave of Olive this evening with
more tenderness than he has allowed himself to exhibit before. Suddenly, when he reaches the door, he turns back, seizes her hand, and kisses it desperately. "We go down by an early train to-morrow morning," he explains. "I shall not see you for six weeks, Olive."

"The time will be longer to me than to you," she murmurs. But she feels sure now he is, he will be, her own Philip at last.

After all, there is a delay of a week or ten days in the Tollington departure. The admiral receives the honor of knighthood, and remains to attend a levee before going down to his port. And Lady Tollington gets herself presented, and, from the moment she passes out from the presence of royalty, feels a withering contempt for every one who "hasn't a title, and doesn't visit at court." Never did the prefix of "Lady" give such entire happiness to a human being before. For a moment her heart is as light as her head; it would not astonish her at all, nor would it, indeed, seem other than a perfectly natural proceeding, if, as she descends from her carriage in all the glory of her court train, Philip Fletcher were to fling his cloak on the pavement for her to trample on.

Happily for himself, Philip has a fair sense of humor, and Lady Tollington is a perpetual source of purest joy to him for many a long day.

CHAPTER XXX.

MISS WESTCOTT "THINKS."

Phil's whisper to Madge is perfectly audible to her. Unluckily—as she feels—it is perfectly audible to Miss Westcott also. Phil, making off to discharge a duty that his conscience tells him has been too long neglected, leaves the two girls almost alone together, for the few saunterers in the corridors are 'strangers to them both. For a moment Madge thinks that she will get up and walk away without a word; but she remembers in time that such a proceeding will have the air of fleeing before the face of an enemy. So she remains quiescent, and can think of nothing easy to say that may break the spell of silence naturally.

Miss Westcott presently saves her further trouble on that score. Miss Westcott, in a perfectly unembarrassed way, has been standing by the side of the young heiress "who has jilted that handsome fellow, Phil's cousin," looking down with good-natured, lively interest on the graceful head and pretty face that are so steadily averted from her. As soon as she has made herself thoroughly acquainted with the details of Madge's dress, and the way in which Madge's hair is arranged, she says,

"How silly boys are to take too much Champagne; are they not? Here my cousin Ronald has spoiled the evening for Phil by his stupidity; isn't it silly of him?"

"Rather more than silly, I think," Madge says, stifly. She is rather offended, to tell the truth, by this familiar address. "Why should she force me into conversation because she's engaged to Phil?" Madge asks herself, leaping to an erroneous conclusion, after the manner of women; "perhaps he has desired her to cultivate me. Oh!" There is much wrath in the way she says "oh!" half aloud, and the tone catches Miss Westcott's ear.

Miss Westcott is one of those happy-hearted creatures who are troubled with very few scruples about any thing on earth, and who have no scruples at all about obeying their friendly instincts. So now, when Madge seems impatient and vexed, her companion says, amiably,

"Shall I go into the room with you, and look for your friends; I'm due to some one for the next dance, and it won't be nice for you to wait here alone. Phil will be sure to find you in the room."

"I had no intention of waiting here for Mr. Fletcher," Madge says, rising up, and knowing that the unwonted color in her face is painting her story vividly.

"Oh! but he asked you!" Miss Westcott says, in some surprise, as if it were altogether beyond her conception that any one could disregard a request of Phil's. "How infatuated she must be to think that every one worships him because she does," Madge says to herself. And then she tries to gentle her thoughts, and can only succeed in thinking that "the girl Phil has chosen ought to be more dignified and reserved."

"Poor Madge! she does not understand her own feelings, and she does not dare to analyze them. Jealousy is blinding her eyes, or she would see that there is no tender interest in Phil, in the manner or tone of the elastic-footed young lady, stepping along so gayly by her side. As it is, it is a positive relief to Madge when a mighty hunter swoops down upon the young Diana, and the pair go off just as she reaches Mrs. Henderson and Aunt Lucy.

"You haven't been dancing lately," Aunt Lucy says; "Madge, I know you want to get home—shall we go at once?"

"Poor Madge professes herself "ready to go," with a faltering tongue. It is hard to be taken away before Phil can come and speak to her once more, for the last time, perhaps; it is very, very hard. A minute before and she had been indignant at it being supposed possible that she would "wait for Phil;" now it seems to her that it will be ill-bred, unfriendly, heartless, and insulting on her part to go, after having consented by her silence to stay. What has he done that she should treat him with scantier courtesy than she would show to any other former friend, even if he is going to commit the enormity of marrying Miss Westcott.

As she stands, putting it to herself thus, Mrs. Henderson watches and reads something of the real state of the case.

"I don't think Madge ought to be one of
the first to go," she says; "let it be felt that
she takes a heartly interest in the hunt ball." 
And so it is settled, and Aunt Lucy yawningly
resigns herself to wait another hour, in order
that her niece may portray a proper interest in
the festival held in honor of the grandest sport
of her native country.

After some time, during which Madge has
felt that she is lowering her flag considerably,
and that many of those about her must know
why she so pertinaciously refuses to dance,
though she stays on, Phil comes up breathless
from the exertions he has used in subdued his
pupil's riotous spirits. His face lights up as he
notices the irresistible "welcome" that beams from her eyes at sight of him; and the
way in which he offers her his arm, and she in-
stantly takes it, suggests to lookers-on a previ-
ous understanding.

"You did wait," he says, gratefully, as he
hurries her on to a clearer corner; "how good of
you!"

"It was the commonest civility, as you asked
me to do it," she answers; and then she
nerves herself to add, "I wanted to tell you
that I hope you will be very happy."

There is broad amazement in his face as he
bends down to look at her.

"Thank you; but what calls forth the hope
just now?"

"She seems to be a very nice girl," Madge
goes on, nearly choking over each word—con-
gratulating a man one loves on his engagement
to another woman is not the pleasantest thing
in life—"a very nice girl indeed. I hope I
shall know her better by-and-by."

"What are you talking about?" he inter-
rupts.

"About Miss Westcott, of course!"

"Ah! yes, she is a very nice girl," he says,
carelessly, looking round him as he speaks for
a spot where they will not be jostled by the
wild waltzers.

"Perhaps they're engaged privately, and he
doesn't wish to speak about it; well! if that's
the case, the young lady should be a little
more discreet," Madge thinks, resentfully,
little knowing that discretion and Miss West-
cott will never have any thing to do with one
another; and by this time Phil has selected his
spot, and is conveying her to it. And once
more they are, comparatively speaking, isolated
and far from observation. As soon as they
stand still, he asks,

"Shall I meet with a welcome if I come to
Halsworthy?"

"Yes; and so you will if you come to Moor-
bridge House," Madge responds, promptly,
though she is thinking, the while, "how odious
it will be if he rides over with that overpower-
ing girl, and expects me to admire her feats of
noble horsemanship!"

"Then I shall come," Phil says, gravely and
steadily; "it was for this that I asked you to
wait. Perhaps I am not justified in what I
have done, under all circumstances; perhaps I
have taken an unwarrantable liberty, as you
made no sign of wishing to continue on friend-
ly terms with me; tell me? Have I?"

"How can he dare to suppose that his en-
gagement makes any difference in my feelings
toward him?" Madge thinks, angrily; and her
anger makes her tone cold and her words tart.

"You forget that I have had no opportunity
of making such a sign; however, now I tell
you, I shall be very glad to see you if I'm at
home when you visit Mrs. Henderson; and
now I must release Aunt Lucy, if you please."

Her words and manner damp him dreadful-
ly; he leads her to her friends, cloaks her,
takes her to her carriage in glum, unhappy si-
ence. He considers that she has pointedly
expressed to him her desire that they should
be on merely friendly terms, and these are not
nearly sufficient to content him as he thinks of
her and her pleasant beauty and sweetness.

Altogether the hunt ball is a failure as far
as these two young people are concerned; but
it has been one of long-continued triumph to
Miss Westcott.

The Westcotts are going to stay in Winsta-
ple until after the county ball, which is to take
place two days after the hunt ball. The West-
cotts' home life is easy and unfettered enough;
but they seem to revel in greater freedom still,
now that they are staying away, with all the con-
titions of their daily life altered. Miss West-
cott makes her own arrangements at the hunt
ball, and informs her friends what they (the ar-
rangements) are, the next morning at break-
fast.

"We shall be out nearly all day, mamma,"
she begins; "we arranged a riding party last
night to start at eleven this morning."

"Who is going?" Phil asks.

"Why you, of course, and six other men,
and my sister and myself."

"Are you the only ladies?"

"Happily, we are," Miss Westcott laughs
out, merrily.

Now Phil has made up his mind that he will
go to Halsworthy this morning; therefore the
plan Miss Westcott has made for him is obnox-
ious; but he has a dread of rousing suspicion,
and of hearing any chaffing allusion made to
Madge, and he knows well that the Miss West-
cotts are proficient in the art of chaff, and fear-
less in their use of that art; therefore he is in
a cleft stick.

"I shall not be able to go at eleven, for I
shall be engaged with Ronald till long after
that."

"Poor boy! are you going to punish him
for his ebullition of last night by making him
work to-day? If I were Ronald, I'd rebel;
you wouldn't get me to work, Phil, during the
Winstaple week."

"Don't incite him to rebellion, that's all I
ask of you," Phil says, getting up, and walking
away to the door to avoid further discussion;
but before he can get himself out of the room,
Miss Westcott is gayly dancing after him.
"My dear Phil, I'll wait till one rather than go without you; come! that's a concession you wouldn't get your grand Miss Roden to make; she was absolutely huffy at your asking her to wait a minute in the corridor last night, when you were called to put a stop to Ronald's war-dance. I'll wait till one, and disappoint the rest for you—there!"

"My dear," her mother says, when the girl returns, after having wrung an ungracious assent from Phil, "Phil Fletcher will think you value his society very highly, and other people will think something else."

It is the most direct reproof the girl has ever received from her mother, and it has the surprising effect on Miss Westcott of making her "think."

Now the result of "thought" on such a subject, in a vigorous young mind like Miss Westcott's, is often extremely delerious to others. She sums up the whole business succinctly and speedily. She is in love with Phil Fletcher, and, of course, "Phil Fletcher is in love with her!"

Naturally, having come to this conclusion, when she next meets Phil—which is just as they are about to start for their ride—she behaves like the pure-minded, honest-hearted young idiot she is; blushes scarlet, and fears, in her confused enlightenment, that he must have thought her very bold and forward for asking him to come to-day; and her blushing embarrassment is contagious; Phil catches it, wonders what the girl is thinking of, and why she drops her eyes before his in a way she never did before, and wishes, with all his power of wishing, that he had stood to his guns, and refused to have joined the riding party this day.

He has a fair excuse for keeping rather aloof from the rest, in the presence of his pupil, by whose side he rides slightly in the rear of the others. Ronald has a headache, and is generally low and penitential. He is the son of a rich mother, but he has not the money to pay for his escapade of last night, and Phil has insisted that Ronald shall tell the whole truth about the broken looking-glass, when he makes the application to Mrs. Westcott for money to pay for it.

It is a bright, crisp winter day, and the atmosphere has such an exhilarating effect on Miss Westcott that the girl forgets her embarrassment, and the cause of it, and resumes her normal manner to the extent of reining up for Phil to ride by her. "I do like this kind of thing," she says, in a glow; "riding through villages that we don't know the names of—that we've never seen before, and probably shall never see again—I do like it; don't you?"

"Yes," Phil answers, hesitatingly; "but I think—why surely, yes, I have seen this one before."

"We are in the High Street of Halsworthy," one of the men in advance shouts back. And then they both remember the place, and the occasion of their former visit to it.

"We drove your cousin and you once to Moorbridge, to be sure, and regarded him as the master of it almost; how could that girl break it off? I do think it cruel; don't you, Phil?"

"I know nothing of the circumstances of the case," he says, tersely. "I only know that she is incapable of cruelty."

"It's such a charming old house, full of carvings and pictures, and all sorts of queer old things," Miss Westcott kindly explains to any one who will listen to her; "we had such a jolly luncheon there, when Mr. Fletcher did the honors to us. Look here, Phil," she adds, suddenly; "why shouldn't we call on Miss Roden now?"

"Such a party of us," Phil protests, a thrill of utter aversion to the plan she has mooted possessing him. But Miss Westcott is pertinacious.

"The size of the party is nothing against our going. I should be delighted to see a regiment ride up to our house any day—and every day—as far as that goes; and I do want to see if she's quite in harmony with her house; besides, we're neighbors; we ought to call; give me a pencil, and I'll write mamma's name on my card—and please make haste."

Unwillingly enough, he gives her the pencil; but he can not prevent Miss Westcott from calling on any one she pleases—he realizes this truth perfectly. As he returns his pencil to his pocket, he says,

"Ronald and I will ride on."

"If you do, I shall think you very unkind; and surely Miss Roden will think it very impolite, when I tell her that you came actually to her gates, and wouldn't come in."

"You wouldn't tell her."

"Yes, I would, Phil; I shall be vexed enough to say anything, if you don't come. I ought to call, you know," she adds, persuasively, "because when we were left together last night we quite made friends."

It is Miss Westcott's happy idiosyncrasy to believe invariably that she quite "makes friends" with every one she meets; and, as a rule, she is justified in her belief.

Carried by her eloquence, or her will, or by some unknown force in his own nature which he can not gainsay, Phil rides on into the grounds of Moorbridge House—rides on in front with brilliant Miss Westcott; and the rest of the cavalcade follow them along the avenue.

Madge has staid at home all this morning. It is in vain that her aunt has impressed upon her at brief intervals that there is nothing like a brisk walk for wearing off fatigue. Madge declares that she is not in the least fatigue, and that therefore the walk would be a work of supererogation. She does not even go down to the village. She does not even go to the big pond that is frozen over, and which is out of sight of the house. "And all the winter you've been wishing for a good frost that you
might have some skating!” Aunt Lucy complained, pathetically.

Phil has asked her for a welcome, and she has promised him one; and after a night’s meditation, she is not sorry for it. No false shame shall keep her from giving him a full and hearty one whenever he comes; and something tells her he will come to-day.

She and her golden greyhound, and her three peacocks, as they strut round her for food, make a bright picture enough on the terrace. Madge is in green velvet (that gleams like an emerald when the sun shines on it) and beaver-skin today; and in her Tyrolean hat one metallic-looking feather glistered. She is all warmth and light as she hears the sound of horses’ feet. She looks up with a face fair as the day and rosy as the morn, and sees Phil and Miss Westcott riding toward her.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"WHO LOVES—YET DOUBTS."

Madge makes no sign of being punished by the spectacle advancing at a hand canter toward her. She is punished horribly; but she is as game as one of her own Exmoor red deer, or as one of the best of the hounds that are always hungering for the destruction of the aforesaid red deer. There is no shadow of the exquisite pain at her heart tingling either her face or her manners, as she quietly frees herself from the greyhound and the peacocks that are parading around her, and advances to offer greetings to her guest.

It is the most crushing, convincing proof that could have been offered her of Phil’s allegiance being due to this frank-faced young lady, who so cheerfully takes it for granted that Madge is as delighted to see her as she is to come to Moorbridge House. By the time the vanguard have come up, and Madge has ascertained something of the nature of the honor thus thrust upon her, all doubts (they were very few and weak at first) as to the propriety of her conduct have fled from Miss Westcott’s mind. In her young, strong, hearty appreciation of the out-of-course character of the proceedings, she is on the brink of explaining to Madge how and with whom she had last entered the house. She gets as far, in fact, as “Oh, Miss Roden, do you know when I came here—” and then she stops abruptly, and colors freely, and looks in helpless appeal to Phil to come to the rescue.

But Madge does not catch the sentiment; she fails even to catch the sense of this speech. All her faculties are fully engaged in the task of subduing the slightest sign of the suffering she is enduring. And she masters her task gallantly, as only a thorough-bred creature can. The recollection that she is the sole representative of a race that has been honored and honorable in the county for generations, comes to her as a timely aid. She is all the “young lady of the land”—she is all that the most jealous lover of Madge Roden could desire her to be—and nothing more, as she makes a graceful welcome for these unbidden guests.

There is not the slightest doubt about her being in harmony with her house, as she leads the way into it with Miss Westcott by her side. This young girl of twenty-one has all the machinery of hospitality ready to her hand; but what is even more, she has the talent and the tact to work it well. “It’s just time for luncheon,” she says to Miss Westcott, as she walks on; and then she looks and nods slightly to the servant who is holding the door. In that nod there is a whole volume of directions; for in this house the servants catch the spirit of the wishes of their young mistress with marvelous promptitude.

“Thank you; it would be delightful to lunch here again—I mean it would be delightful, but we’re such a throng,” Miss Westcott says, tripping up in her speech and reminiscences. And then Madge offers a comprehensive explanation that it will be “delightful to her too.”

She takes her guests into the room where her own portrait hangs, and where Aunt Lucy is sitting, a little out of gear already, by reason of the re-appearance of a Philip Fletcher—it doesn’t much matter which it is—they have both been disturbing elements in Madge’s life. When she sees the troop by whom he is accompanied, her sense of the untowardness of it all deepens. A horde of barbarians from the hills would have been as welcome to Aunt Lucy, who looked upon casual people as a branch of human suffering from which the upper classes should be exempt.

But her conventional ice has to thaw, her conservatism has to give way, before the warm and steady way in which poor Madge decides on carrying on the war. Aunt Lucy is always made of full account in the house by her niece, but there is not the slightest doubt in the minds of any one of those who have invaded this territory as to which is the reigning queen of it.

“Aunt,” she says, as Phil goes up to shake hands with the old lady, “Mr. Fletcher and his friends will lunch with us presently;” and while Aunt Lucy is still warring under this intelligence, for her gloomy imagination foresees more love-making, more engagements, and, finally, more abrupt and inexplicable terminations to the same; while she wrestles unsuccessfully with these dark, prophetic pangs, Madge carries her visitors off to the “observatory” in a whirl, from which she does not dare to cease.

“It would be odious to fall flat because—some one has done something I never thought he would do,” Madge tells herself; but all the while she is taking Miss Westcott’s measure most accurately, and can not find that young lady deserving mentally of her friend Phil.
"She would do so well for Grif," Madge thinks; "why won't the right people come together?"

The "observatory," as it is euphemistically called at Moorbridge House, is simply a square planked surface, guarded by wide-apart rails, and protruding from one of the shelving sides of the house. The ascent to it is by a wide, flat-stepped ladder outside the house. Altogether it is a perilous-looking place, fragile and steep; and as such, Miss Westcott feels disinclined to scale it. "I think—I don't care for views," she says, in a tone that is both deprecatory and explanatory. "I don't care for views, and I get giddy if I go up ladders; so don't mind me."

She shouts this to Madge, who is already half-way up the "look-out," or observatory; and Madge smiles a bland assent, and graciously continues to lead the way for those whose love of scenery or sensation will take them up to one of the best artificial "look-outs" in this boundary land. It is not until she gains the summit, that she realizes that she is alone here with Phil; that all the rest have elected to remain below with their liege lady of the hunt.

She commences doing the honors in a hurried manner, that is neither polite nor politic, for it proves her ill at ease; and Phil all the while is most mournfully self-possessed—like one unto whom Fate has done her worst.

Madge turns from side to side, and airily indicates every thing, or rather endeavors to indicate every thing, that is within their range of vision. And Phil doubles her difficulties by abstractedly gazing at her, and her only.

Presently the frosty air, and the tension of her nerves, causes a perceptible shiver to run through her frame, which she tries to explain away by drawing back abruptly from the rail she has been leaning against, and saying, "Awful a fall would be from here down into that knobby, stony court-yard."

"Are you getting giddy?" he asks, coming a step nearer to her.

"No, but cold; and whenever I'm cold, I'm depressed: let us go down."

"I am giddy with a vengeance," he says, making a movement to stop her; "the air has intoxicated me, I suppose, given me the false, futile courage to tell you that I love you, Miss Roden, though I'm not mad enough to ask you to love me in return."

He ceases; and Madge stands, her head slightly raised, though her eyes are bent down, in order to avoid a gaze whose ardor she believes to be an insult to her. He can dare to tell her this, while the girl to whom he is engaged is at the foot of the ladder, waiting for them! Farewell the cherished romance! Indeed, he is as far from being the realization of her high ideal as was his cousin. Her inward cry must still be, "He cometh not!"—the high-souled, honest lover she had taught herself to wait for.

It never enters her mind that it is the view he is having of the extent of the territory over which she reigns which has impressed him with a sense of his own madness in letting himself love her. Madge is a thorough woman; she is so much more to herself than her fat, productive acres are to her. She likes being the lady of the land; but above all things, she is Madge.

There is a very brief pause, but it seems a long one to the young man, who is conscious of his own presumption, not to put the most humiliating interpretation on her silence. Then she says—and her heart does ache to have to say it, "You must be giddy indeed. I am more hurt than I can tell you, that you should have thought so lowly of me—and yourself, as to have said that; for I did hope to keep friends with you."

The sensation which may be supposed to have beset the bold page who loved the king's daughter, set in strongly in Phil's breast. He had not anticipated such a crushing rebuff as this, though he had told himself repeatedly that he had "no hope."

"And now have I forfeited your friendship?"

She tries to lash herself into anger in order that she may not break down and feebly cry over the downfall of her belief in his being better, and nobler, and truer altogether, than any other man.

"Yes, you have," she says, distinctly; "you know, all things considered, that your words were an insult; how could you dare to talk of love to me—situated as you are?"

"How could I, indeed. I am punished very properly; Miss Roden, you have given me a sharp lesson; be assured, I shall not offend again."

They have succeeded in perfectly bewildering and mystifying one another, and they both go down smarting and tingling with mortification. "That he should think so badly of me as to believe I'd let another girl's lover talk of loving me," Madge thinks. "That she, of all girls in the world, should come down and crush me with the facts of my position, and penilessness, and presumption," poor Phil feels. And he hates beaming, bright, boisterous Miss Westcott for having brought him into this valley of degradation, forgetting that he would have come alone if she had not captured him, and tied him to her chariot wheel.

As far as the two chief actors in the piece are concerned, it moves along very heavily after this. Phil is sick with mortification and disappointment. Madge is shattered by this rude awakening from her day-dream. The others, to be sure, are perfectly at their ease, and seem well able to enjoy their luncheon, in spite of that abstraction on Madge's part which renders her all at once a limp and inefficient hostess.

His parting words, uttered in haste, but coming, as they do, straight from his heart, wring hers horribly, both for him and for her-
self. Unluckily, they only confirm her in her previous belief.

"Forgive me," he says; "I only remembered that you were a woman to be won, and that I was a man who might win; you have made me repent my want of memory bitterly enough."

"Not more than I do," she answers, softened in spite of her sense of outrage; "it has shocked me more than I can tell you."

And with these words of doom and dismissal ringing in his ears, he rides away from Moorbridge House by Miss Westcott's side.

By the day of the county ball, Madge is unfit to go to it. "A feverish cold in my head, I think," she says to Mrs. Henderson. "I suppose, after that bad attack, I wanted a more thorough change of air than I have got by coming from one part of the moor to another." And when she says this, Mrs. Henderson fully understands that the fever is in Madge's heart.

It is painful to see how the girl wanes after this—how she wearies over the very things that have been wont to interest and amuse her hitherto. The change is not sudden; but it is any thing but slow. A fortnight has not elapsed since those miserable five minutes on the observatory, before the palpable decrease in Madge's bounding vitality startles Mrs. Henderson into making a plan, and wheedling Madge into the belief that she is essential to the proper carrying out of it.

"I am obliged to spend a couple of months in town, dear," she says to Madge, as carelessly as she can; "business takes me up, and I shall take the opportunity of getting good music lessons for Florry; you must come with us."

And after a slight opposition on Madge's part, the plan is put into execution, and she goes up to town the end of March.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LADY TOLLINGTON.

"What matters a little more waiting to one who has waited for years?"

The six weeks, at the end of which Philip has promised Olive and himself the dubious delight of another meeting, have elapsed, have nearly doubled themselves, in fact, and his onerous duties chain Philip to his post.

But his letters keep alive the flame of her faith in him—she does not even need them to keep alight the fire of her love for him; but her faith would probably flicker out, if he never wrote to her. But he does write, and write very tenderly too, calling her his "darling" constantly, and constantly entreating her to tell him that her anxiety to meet him again equals his to meet her. But failing, failing always, to say, "Will you marry me, Olive?" or "Will you be my wife?" or any other definite sentence on which she can lean her tired heart, and let the poor thing be at rest.

She, sitting alone night after night in the dull and little room, which is the only home she has now, draws endless mind-pictures of "Philip, and of what he is doing." The one she likes best is of him sitting alone in Sir John Tollington's library, burning the midnight oil, as he has described himself doing more than once. There is an endless round of gayety in this garnison and sea-port town, he has told her; but he keeps aloof from it as much as he can, for she is not there.

In one respect Olive is happier than she was when we last saw her, for Madge Roden has sought her out, and compelled her to be glad and rejoice to a certain degree. All bonds of reserve have been burst between the two girls, and it is Olive's greatest pleasure now to hear how it was Philip's irrepressible expression of deep love for herself which brought about the severance between Madge and himself. But though Madge knows Olive's story, Olive does not know Madge's. The Phil episode has been fraught with too much hopeless agony for her to care or to dare to talk about it.

Madge has been in town a month now, hearing almost daily of Phil's mother and sisters from Mrs. Henderson, who visits her old friend constantly—but never hearing Phil's name even; that, by mutual consent, is sedulously avoided. The hero is fallen, the idol is shattered; but Madge has not the courage to question "how far?" or to "what extent?"

The Fletchers, in their humble little home in the unimportant street in Chelsea, get all their convictions on the subject of Madge's arrogance, and proud sense of her own position, strengthened, as they hear of her being in London, and day after day passes without her crossing their threshold.

"It is evident that she will have nothing to do with any of Philip's relations, though we're friends of her friend," the old lady says, with a sigh, for she has an old lady-like curiosity to see this queen of her nephew's ill-fated romance. And Mrs. Henderson can only speak a platitude by way of reply, for she is feeling sure that Madge does not dare to have any thing to do with Phil's mother and sisters, and that Philip has nothing whatever to do with it.

Meanwhile Philip is making the best of the miserable circumstances which keep him from Olive. His onerous official duties occupy but a small portion of the time. But his ex-official duties are never-ending.

Lady Tollington is constantly mounting her throne and waving her sceptre, and her household have a hard time of it. She will insist on being younger, prettier, more attractive, more popular, more hospitable, more talked about, than any one else in the place. She wears the most conspicuous dresses in this place, where the majority seem to aim at dressing conspicuously. She Compasses the purchase of a pair of the most striking and spirited cobs to be had in the region round about. Her driving powers are very limited. Even her adoring hus-
band sees and acknowledges to himself that they are. Consequently he gives up a portion of his secretary's time in order that Lady Tollington may be spared the shock of driving over countless multitudes of the Queen's lieges, or of being upset ignominiously through confusion of mind and the reins.

This post of honor, to do him justice, is not coveted by Philip. But he suffers himself to be thrust into it, partly because the supreme vanity of the woman amuses him, and partly because it is about half a degree less wearisome to him than his proper work.

After all, and considerably to her own surprise, Philip Fletcher is the only young man from whom the Queen of the Port can exact homage—the only young man that is of mark, either in manner or appearance. She is too well acquainted with the "quarter-deck" feeling which obtains in the service, for the young commanders and lieutenants who swarm about the place to think of her as a desirable shrine. She never for a single instant forgets that she is the much-deferred wife of the port-admiral; and so her dream of a perpetually re-enforced body-guard of promising young officers is proved a fallacious one.

In fact, the shallow, vain creature is a failure in this sphere, in spite of her power of entertaining, and her frantic efforts to maintain the supremacy. Prettier women, more fascinating! women, attend her réunions, and take off the attention which she so palpably demands. In her mean vexation very often she administers undefinable slights and humiliations to these ladies, which, undefinable as they are, are resented by the brother officers of the ladies' husbands. In a short time there are two distinct parties in the place—the port-admiral's wife against the most shining lights in the company of the wives of the juniors. And Lady Tollington's party is far from being the strongest, for it is composed of the men who have given up all hopes of fair promotion—men who are demoralized, in short, by long careers of disappointment and neglect. These bow the knee low enough; but it is neither the homage of the heart nor the homage of taste. It is simply the homage that Failure, crushed down into mean-spiritedness, pays to Success; and Lady Tollington does not value it one jot or tittle.

So, in her abandonment by those members of the service to whom she had intended being benignant, she falls back upon Philip, with the soothing conviction that, at any rate, he is as handsome, as clever, as entertaining and distinguished altogether, as any one of those who will not fight under her banner. She makes his position of account in her house, as only the mistress of a house can make it; and remembers, for every one's benefit, how "gallantly he had saved her life, at the risk of his own."

And Philip, who has no dislike to her, who has, on the contrary, rather a feeling of grati-

tude toward her for amusing him by her kind and inordinate vanity, allows himself to be meretriciously treated, and made of much account in Sir John Tollington's establishment.

"Sir John looks upon him as a son quite; and as for myself, I regard him as a brother," she tells people. And so between the paternal and fraternal feelings which he has brought into play, Philip has a pleasant time of it—although he knows that hope is making the heart of the only woman he loves in the world sick unto death.

For some reason or other, the subtle force of which he can not discern, because he is too indifferent to trouble himself about it, Lady Tollington distinguishes Mr. Philip Fletcher even more in public than she does in private. It seems to be her object to make people understand that it is by her own choice that Philip is her sole aid-de-camp. And though Philip knows better, still he accepts the situation, for he likes to feel the ball at his feet.

He talks openly enough (when it suits him) to Lady Tollington of his engagement to Miss Roden, and of the narrow escape Moorehouse House has had from having him as its master. But never a word (no one is wholly bad), never a word, does he say, or permit Lady Tollington to say, about Olive. And Lady Tollington most thoroughly understands that, though Philip values her patronage to a certain degree, because it keeps him in the quarters he likes, he would throw it away without an effort, if she gave her tongue liberty to utter one slighting, much more one evil, word of Olive.

There is much that is unc congenial to Philip in his easy berth and luxurious home. In the first place, he knows that his position depends on the will of a woman who is as vain as a peacock and as unstable as water. The lady's talent for ruling develops as opportunities of exercising it are given to her, according to the merciful system of supply and demand. Without any heart and with very little head, with meagre natural abilities and absolutely no cultivation, her feminine love of sway enables her to detect and play upon the weakest points of all who come within her jurisdiction. Sir John Tollington, unquestionably, is good, and brave, and honorable; but he does come within the jurisdiction of the lady who owes her greatness to him; and being human, he has weak points in his character.

Clear-sighted outsiders, whose daily comfort does not depend upon this lady, sneer contemptuously enough at the old officer's infatuation for the frivolous woman whose frivolity has the demerit of not being designed to please them. But Sir John Tollington only sees in it an ever-changing form of the youthful exuberant spirit which charmed him into marrying her. And though she is incapable of forming clear and just estimates concerning any thing that is a little outside the commonest experience; though she is shallow; though her likes and dislikes are all founded on fancy, and never on fact—

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still he defers to the one and consults the other, and is generally well pleased to be guided by that weather-cock, her will.

And it is her will that Philip Fletcher shall hold a post of her gaining, and occupy a position which she has the power of rendering comfortable or comfortless, just as the whim may seize her. "It must be so mortifying to that upstart, Olive Aveland," she feels, "to know that the man she is foolishly in love with is living by the favor and patronage of her former mistress." She sometimes hardly knows whether it was liking for Philip or hatred of Olive which made her win this secretaryship for him.

But the chains are very light with which she has shackled him, as yet. It is only when he proposes "running up to town for a few days," that she makes him feel them. And then she is too cunning to compromise herself. It is always Sir John who reminds Philip that his presence will be needed at a luncheon or reception. "I am not quite up to the mark of exerting myself just now," Sir John has fallen into the habit of saying, "and I can't leave it all to Lady Tollington; as it is, in her anxiety to save me, she never spares herself."

So gradually it comes about that Philip has the management of most things, for Sir John (old brother officers remark with sympathy and sorrow) is less and less "up to the mark" day by day.

In spite of the caution which he exercises in his correspondence with her, in spite of the easy selfishness and love of luxury which permits him to leave her so long in doubt, Philip has the thought of marrying that faithful old love of his very frequently in his mind. He believes himself that he is only waiting on her in order to win a stronger interest from Sir John. When that is secured, he believes he will ask for some better and more independent post, and that when such a one is secured, he will seek Olive fairly and honestly, and marry her. He really believes that he will do this; but still he holds back from committing himself to any definite line of action, and refrains from any definite form of words.

And so the weeks pass on, and he reads her letters, and thrills to their tone of suppressed tenderness, and longs to see her as he never has longed, and never will long, to see any other woman in this world. And while he is hesitating and procrastinating, in a way that is wicked by reason of its extreme weakness, a great crash comes, and whatever interest he may have created in Sir John's kindly heart is of no avail.

For Sir John Tollington has died of one of the hidden diseases that make no sign until they have gathered strength to kill without giving their victims time to make one struggle against them. And Philip Fletcher is again cast out of a situation, and again made to feel himself the veriest foot-ball of fortune.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"THE ONLY SON OF HIS MOTHER!"

It is a softly-brilliant May morning. Sunny reflections, undisturbed even by passing clouds, are lying in broad flashes of golden radiance on the white pavement of the streets and the tender young greensward of the parks. There is misery, and dimness, and dirt enough not very far from them, lurking in many an unsuspected spot. But from the Apsley House gate down to Kensington Gore, all looks happy, and bright, and clean, and prosperous. And it is between these two places that Mrs. Henderson and Madge have been walking up and down for an hour.

"The day is so much more beautiful than any we have had yet," Madge says, "that I should like to do something quite different with it from any thing we have done yet."

"What would you like to do with it?"

"I don't know; we are two lone, lorn women, and so we must go on doing the cut-and-dried things, I suppose. But if Mr. Henderson were here, I'd make him take me for a prowl."

"Where would you like to go, Madge; I can take you anywhere you like."

"No you can't—not where I want to go, I'm sure. I only know the bright side of London: now I want to see some of the 'haunts' that people shake their heads about: I want to go where there is misery and vice—"

"You needn't step for that," Mrs. Henderson interrupts.

"I know that," Madge says, softly and pathetically; "but I want to see some of the people who haven't money and friends, and social excitements, to make their trials endurable."

Mrs. Henderson keeps thoughtfully on her way in silence for a time. Presently she says, "I can take you to a house the inhabitants of which have a heavy trial laid upon them; and you will see how bravely they bear it, though they have very little money, and very few friends, and certainly no social excitements, to make it endurable."

"I should like to go home and get some money first," Madge begins, and Mrs. Henderson seems embarrassed as she answers,

"It's not a case of that kind, dear; it's not destitution and want in a shocking and repulsive form; how shall I explain it? it's middle-class need and anxiety, Madge—things that you can not possibly understand."

Madge nods her head sagaciously.

"I see," she says; "the father, the bread-winner, has fallen ill."

"It's a marvel that the bread-winner has not died," Mrs. Henderson says, almost passionately. Then she adds, more calmly, "But he is not the father of the family."

Madge gives an uneasy, interrogatory glance. "You will not see him; he is away; that he is so is half of their trial; but, Madge, you won't shrink from seeing his mother and sisters?"
And then Madge knows that she is being taken to see Phil's family.

It is an experiment, and a doubtful one. Had it been suggested to Mrs. Henderson an hour ago that she should try it, she would have disregarded the suggestion, and shrank from the responsibility. But Madge's yearning, on this bright day, to see something of the darker aspects of life; Madge's craving, when the golden side of the shield was well before her vision, to look at the leaden side also, have melted away all Mrs. Henderson's prudent resolves. "He is not there, and it is well she should see his people exactly as they are; it may rob him of a little of the romance with which she has unconsciously invested him; but, on the other hand, she'll know him as the man he is the better for it: and they know nothing."

There is comfort and safety in their ignorance, she firmly believes. To old Mrs. Fletcher, Madge will be simply the young lady her nephew won under false pretenses, and who finally failed to love him; that Madge is an object of the dearest, tenderest interest to her son; that Madge would like nothing better than to ask for a maternal blessing kneeling at her feet; that Madge has not looked at a newspaper for weeks, for the dread she has of the news of Phil's marriage with Miss Westcott being given to her by some one of their unsympathetic columns; of all these things, which might tend to create confusion, Mrs. Fletcher is blissfully ignorant. And in the knowledge that she is this, Mrs. Henderson is comparatively happy.

The change from flashing fashion, from unmistakable wealth and splendor, to struggling respectability, and then on to actual squalor, can be made in five minutes in any part of London. But in no part of it, I think, can we step from restless seething To-day, back into quiet, peaceful Long Ago, so quickly as we can in the Chelsea and Kensington districts. The city is too full of bustle for its antiquity ever to be apparent to us, save on winter Sunday afternoons. But let us traverse the by-ways of Old Chelsea and Kensington when we will, the fact of their being places of the Past, left far behind by this whirling age, is kept steadily before us.

An abrupt turn takes them out of an ariferous square, into a solid, sombre-looking street of houses that, from attic to basement, speak of monotony, and dullness, and comfort. They have as little to do with the flashing, dashing, whirling, never-at-rest element of the Belgranian square as they have to do with that which impregnates the little street on the other side of them, into which Madge and her friend are now turning. A little street that must have been born about the same time as Hans Place, but born of far poorer parents. A little street, full of picturesque inequalities, built of time-browned red brick. A little street that is gently shaken to its centre if a cab drives up to one of its doors, and that would be dangerously agitated if a private carriage rolled through it. A little street that, it is conceded at once, looks as if its inhabitants had never served Mammon with success. But about which there is nothing vulgar, nothing squalid, nothing repulsive.

Mrs. Henderson stops in front of three steep steps, guarded by twisted iron railings, and surmounted by a door adorned with the traditional brass knocker—a bright, gleaming brass knocker, that betrays no lack of service in the house. And before Madge can make up her mind as to whether she is glad or sorry that she has come, they are ushered into a room where an elderly lady and two younger ones are sitting.

It is a shock to Madge, for a moment, to see Phil's mother—the one she has learned to think of as Mrs. Henderson's contemporary as well as her friend—look so very old! Then she realizes that it is ill health and anxiety that have crushed the middle-aged woman into the semblance of old age. And instantly after this she realizes that the kind eyes smiling at her, the kind voice welcoming her, are just like Phil's.

The girl feels like an impostor, when Mrs. Henderson introduces her to them. She knows that Chrissy and Mabel are attributing the changing color in her face to her remorseful recollections of their cousin Philip. "If they only knew, if they could only guess" who it was, the thought of whom was making her tingle with mingled love and humiliation.

Whatever the trouble that may be pressing upon them—and that trouble in some form or other is pressing upon them heavily is evident, from that air of sorrowful suspense which hangs about them like a cloud—but whatever it may be, they do not bring it to the fore. They are, all three of them, taken by that air of deprecation which Madge can not help infusing into her manner. They think her penitent about the broken engagement, and anxious to make them like her for Philip's sake. "Perhaps," Chrissy whispers to Mabel, "this is but a preliminary step; no doubt it will come on again."

By tacit consent, they all avoid mentioning Philip. In fact, to tell the truth, it would be hard for them to mention him, for they love the ne'er-do-well heartily still, and he has shunned them, and cut himself off from them in a way that each one of these three women has been weak enough to weep about. They belong to the order who can not endure to see Time treading on the graves of affection. He has bruised their hearts horribly, but he has failed in hardening them.

Presently—choosing it in the beautiful faith of its being the one topic in the world in which there can not be pain to any human being—Mrs. Fletcher introduces the subject of her son.

"Chrissy goes to her brother to-morrow," she says, in a tone that tells a little of the enormous amount of calculation and resolution which has been brought to bear on the final decision.

"You have not heard from him, then?" Mrs.
Henderson says, so sympathetically, that Madge looks up questioningly, startled, smitten with a sudden conviction that it is some "evil which has happened to Phil!" this trial which the Fletchers are bearing bravely.

Her whole face works with piteous emotion, and in the midst of her generous agitation she is horribly perplexed as to what she "shall do with a big tear that will roll down presently, and be an unbecoming inconvenience." His mother sees something of all this; for Madge is not one of the rapid, colorless, bloodless creatures who fall in portraying agitation: she does it only too vividly, only too well.

"My dear," Mrs. Fletcher says, won to familiar tenderness by the girl's sympathetic face, "you know my son a little, don't you? I suppose Mrs. Henderson has told you of our unhappiness; he is dangerously ill."

Madge is not the type of girl who gurgles herself off into hysterics, or falls senseless at the feet of the person nearest to her.

"The sun is in my face," she says, rising up with dazzled eyes and a dazed brain, but speaking steadily and stopping firmly; then she seats herself by Mrs. Fletcher, and says, "tell me about it; yes, I know him very well."

A succession of quick, questioning glances are flashed from the mother and two sisters at Mrs. Henderson. They say plainly as words can say, "Why have you kept this from her; you seemed to feel keen interest," But Mrs. Henderson cannot make answer. She can not tell them that she does not dare speak about a sorrow that is very near to her, to this daughter of her love, because she is in a mist as to why the girl never names him, and why he has withdrawn himself so utterly from them. She dares not tell them this; and so she only says, in reply to their half-reproachful looks,

"It is a relief to me, it must be an intense one to you, that Chrissy has made up her mind to go to her brother; you will be spared the racking suspense you're suffering from now, at any rate."

"Yes, Chris has promised to write every day," Mabel says.

"And I shall send a telegram as soon as I get down to him," Chrissy adds. And then Madge screws up her courage to the point of asking,

"Is he at Delabourn still?"

"Oh no!" Mrs. Fletcher says, shaking her head, regretfully; "was it there you saw him last?"

"No," Madge interrupts, hastily; "I never saw him there; the last time I saw him, he came to call on me with" (and now her face flares) "Miss Westcott."

"Ah, yes," Mrs. Fletcher resumes, "he was with them then; and very happy and comfortable he must have been with them, I'm sure, dear boy, from all I heard of their kindness; but there was an unpleasantness between the mother of his pupil and Phil; something happened at a ball that she didn't like, and she accused Phil of neglect; and he gave up his appointment—and poor fellow—" There is a pause, and the mother is crying.

"And—" Madge says, suggestively and breathlessly,

"And he hasn't been fortunate enough to secure another as yet," Chrissy says, quietly.

"Mamma, dear, don't give way; let us hope for better days; I feel we shall see some of the silver lining soon."

"The cloud has overshadowed us for a long time," Mrs. Fletcher says, trying to subdue her inclination to go on raining down these idle tears; "it's hard, terribly hard, to feel I can do nothing for my boy," she cries, catching hold of Mrs. Henderson's hand; "my dear, you're mercifully spared this—you'll never be a weight on a child you love."

"If I had a son like Phil, I should be glad to be dependent on him," Mrs. Henderson says, calmly, as the two daughters press round Mrs. Fletcher, and strive to soothe her out of her un wonted excitement. And then, as the mother lies back sobbing, broken down by her own words, and by the superb, loving sympathy that gleams in Madge's eyes, Mrs. Henderson takes up the thread of the story, and tells it briefly and succinctly.

"He came up to town and relinquished his charge of the lad who broke the looking-glass, and tried for one or two things in the city, but failed in getting either of them, for some reason or other. Then he went down to Ultracombe, in answer to an advertisement for a secretary; got it, and set to work on his recognized duties by day, and on literary work at night: he did too much, poor boy, broke down, and has been dangerously ill for weeks."

Madge gasps, "Where is Miss Westcott?"

"I really can not tell you," Mrs. Henderson says, coldly, for she is beginning to understand some things that have been mysteries to her hitherto. It grieves her to do so, but she can no longer doubt that her clever, keen-sighted, superior Madge has fallen into the error of being jealous of the overwhelming young colt who treated Phil with the freedom of a big boy.

The question seems altogether irrelevant to the Fletchers. What can it possibly matter to any of them where Miss Westcott is? It seems almost indifferent apathy in Miss Roden to ask them about an outsider, whom they neither know nor care about, while Phil, the best and dearest son and brother in the world, is ill and away from them—is dying and desolate, for aught they know.

But Madge is pertinacious.

"She knows of his illness, doesn't she?" she fal ters out. At the moment she feels capable of any amount of self-abnegation. She could almost bring herself to write a gentle letter of information concerning him to the girl whom she believes will be Phil's wife if he lives.

If he lives! And if he dies, she (Madge) will have to bear the bitter knowledge that another woman will have a closer right to mourn
for him than she has. Nevertheless, feeling this thrillingly as she does, she says,

"She knows of his illness, doesn't she?"

"No—that is, not that we know of; why should they? Phil's connection with the family was broken off naturally when Ronald ceased to be his pupil."

Madge wonders vaguely for half a moment; then her perplexity words itself.

"You don't mean to say that his engagement was broken off when his pupil left him?"

"Why of course it was," Chrissy says, beginning to think that Madge is rather an obtuse young person. And then, as poor Madge ponders upon this enigma, Chrissy and her sister resume the important subject of the journey that is to be taken to-morrow.

"You see it hasn't been convenient to get summer things yet," Chrissy says, naturally offering the excuse that need usually makes for inadequate supplies. "We all thought a black alpaca the very best thing for a sickroom; so Mabel and I have run one up."

"Won't black alpaca be rather a gloomy dress?" Madge says, unthinkingly. She remembers Phil's ardent, genuine admiration for all the brightness with which she was wont to surround herself, and she throbs with pained pity for his weary eyes, if they are condemned to open with returning health on Chrissy in black alpaca.

"We have brightened it up with blue," Chrissy goes on explaining, and Madge thinks the dress must closely resemble a bruise in its worst stage. But she throws this minor consideration aside, in order to listen with absorbed attention to the detailed narration of Chrissy's contemplated plan of action.

"I shall tell them honestly at the hotel that a room on the top story will suit me very well," Chrissy declares, prudentially. "I shall be in it very little, wherever it is; for the few minutes I shall be out of Phil's room, it won't matter where I am; will it?"

She appeals in a flush of sisterly love, anxiety, and sympathy, to her audience, embracing them all, as it were. And Madge loses her head—loses her self-command—loses her fortifying thoughts of Miss Westcott's rights, and responds for every one with a gracious abandonment that only belongs to Madge,

"No, no, no, it won't matter to you, you love him so; and we will go down with you, won't we?" (appealing to Mrs. Henderson); "you sha'n't take that journey, in despair, alone." And in this unpremeditated way, as much to her own surprise as to any one else's, Madge stands forth as the friend of the family she has this day seen for the first time.

There would be something narrow, meagre, uncharitable, Mrs. Henderson feels, in checking such an outburst. So she assents with moderation.

"I shall be glad to go and get the latest news of Phil," she says; "and if you're as tired of town as I am, Madge—"

"Tired?—I'm sick of it."

"Then," the elder lady goes on, "Ilfracombe will be as good as any other place for you, and Chrissy will have a less wretched journey if we are with her; and altogether it seems to me to be the best arrangement we can come to."

And by the time Mrs. Henderson has said this, Madge is back bending over his mother, and saying,

"I'll send you a telegram the minute we arrive, and I'll write to you by every post. And you will feel glad that I am there, sharing all Chrissy's anxieties, won't you?"

How is it that the name falls so trippingly from her tongue? How is it that they all omit to marvel why it does so?

Without any effort, without any exaggerated display of feeling or sentiment concerning their sorrow, she has succeeded in identifying herself with their anticipations and dreads. And Chrissy goes on discussing the preparations she is making for her necessarily limited traveling wardrobe as freely as if Madge had been one of them for years.

The surroundings are all very prosaic. the next morning, when Chrissy comes into the room to join the two friends who have called for her. But, prosaic as they are, there is powerful pathos in the quiet parting which ensues between the daughter and the mother—the poor helpless mother, who has been accustomed for many years to lean solely on the son who is now stricken down out of her reach.

In such a sorrow-bourn as this is, there is a poetry and dignity which no external accessories, however puerile or prosaic these may be, can destroy.

They make the journey—these three sisters of mercy unavowed—in the usual time and way, and reach the monster hotel just as the clanging gong gives the signal for the table d'hôte. "It's enough to crash him into his grave," Madge is feeling hotly; but she cools down to an almost death-like chill, as, in answer to Chrissy's eager question, the hall porter says that "the poor gentleman is past hearing that—or any thing else."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"WORSE THAN 'A MISTAKE.'"

OLIVE AVELAND is still making her home in the house of the kind country-woman who does not look upon her young lodger as a mere machine by which money is to be made. But she no longer bears the burden of the jackets and mantles at "Barr and Battle's." That phase of suffering is lived through, left behind, done altogether. For the uncle, who had been inveterate against her, and callous about her while he lived, has lately died. And while dying he relented, and left her a hundred a year out of the many thousands which he had been in the habit of promising her before she disappointed him.
It is not much, but it is enough to make Olive Aveland as happy as she ever will be until Philip comes to her for life. It is enough to enable her to fling free of her thralldom. It is enough to justify her in standing aside from the rugged road which those must tread who labor to live. On it she can balance herself, as it were, while she takes a quiet survey of the possibilities still left to her. Now that all cause for hurry and anxiety is over, the congenial and remunerative employment which she sought for vainly in her hour of need will be found easily enough, she knows. For sharp experience has taught Olive the absolute truth of the words, "Unto him who hath, shall be given."

She has heard from Philip of Sir John Tollington’s death, and of the consequent downfall of some of Philip’s intentions. And at last, in spite of her injureion and threat, he has mentioned Lady Tollington. But Olive is very tolerant to the mention; indeed, she is almost gratified by it, for it is to the following effect:

"The widow has departed for her home in the highlands with her serfs; and her ponies and their bells, and her new set of mourning jewelry, leaving me to settle every thing here. I shall be heartily glad when I can make my farewell bow to every thing connected with the business, and get up to town. And I think I shall not be alone in my gladness."

There can be no doubt of it. He is her own Philip still. That woman, with her wealth and her wiles, is nothing to him.

She is so softened by her comparative happiness and prosperity, and her absolute contentment with the temporary aspect of affairs, that she actually does not repel Griffiths Poynter’s aunt when that lady makes weak overtures of friendship to her. That she does it at her nephew’s instigation, probably at his positive command, Olive feels. But in her new satisfaction with the world, and tolerance toward her fellow-creatures, she is not disposed to quarrel with the motive, provided the manner be seemly.

The motive of the old lady’s mission is soon made manifest. Griffiths is in London again, passing a purgatorial period for the sake of the bare chance he has of catching a passing glimpse sometimes of the one who makes his Paradise. He wants, he yearns, to see her again—that poor, friendless, helpless one, who will not let him befriend or help her. So he sends his aunt to try and make terms of common courtesy, at least, with the girl who no more realizes his worth than she does the worthlessness of Philip Fletcher.

But the temporary relief she is enjoying renders her very amenable to the advances of a would-be social ally. In her new, benignant mood she does not scout and scoff at the idea of Grif basking in the rays of her friendly smiles. And in her new-born independence she is free to accept his aunt’s invitation to luncheon.

They come for her on the day appointed in a refugent carriage, selected by Griffiths for the occasion, and Grif himself is there with his back to the horses, with his long legs screwed up, with his feet crushing the bloom off his aunt’s rich new mourning silk, and with his most acid cousin by his side. Nevertheless, he is happy; for facing him is Olive, with a face like a carnation—with happy, gleaming, velvet eyes—with a mouth that curves and quivers with smiles—in perfect possession of her full heritage of youth and beauty. And while looking at her as admiringly as he dares, Griffiths thinks, "She is getting over her regard" (he can’t bring himself to speak of it as "love") for that fellow, and in time—"He does not actually word what his belief in what time will accomplish is, but he, too, is quite contented with things as they are, in spite of his cramped position.

Every body is in town again, for it is June, and the flowers and foliage in the parks leave one no excuse for indulgence in longing for any sylvan scenes. They take one turn along the drive to look at the riders in the Row, and then pull up on the verge of a crush of carriages, the occupants of which are waiting and watching.

One brougham, the horses wearing crêpe rosettes, the servants in sable livories, cuts into the inner circle adroitly, and is then brought up almost in a line with the barouche in which Olive is. A fair, vivacious face, framed in light hair and a widow’s bonnet, looks through the open window; and in a moment the vivacious look is chased away by one of vexation and surprise. And Olive recognizes Lady Tollington just as she gives the order to drive on sharply, in a strained soprano.

The mere sight of the woman has a baneful effect on Olive. She can not combat the sense of depression, of helplessness and exhaustion, which this vision of Lady Tollington produces. As she leans back with her face actually fading from that sickness of the soul which debilitates the strongest at times, Grif’s cousin says, with animation.

"What a handsome man with that widow lady!” and Olive understands at once why her spirit had faltered and fainted within her.

That hateful, rich, free woman has got Philip for the time being; got him by her side, got him slaving and struggling to settle her affairs, probably—those odious affairs which, when settled, will enable her to present herself in a fairer light than heretofore before the eyes of men. Small wonder that her face fades, and her heart quails, and her faith falters, as she thinks of all these things.

The graciousness of the day is over for her from that moment. She answers well-meant remarks about people, and places, and current events, in monosyllables. In her restlessness, in her eager desire to get rid of the time that must intervene before she can get home and think about it all, free from the constraining
influence of other people's eyes, she leans forward a little, and says, addressing Griffiths,

"Can you bear this much longer? I should have thought you were the last man in the world who would care to sit still and be stared at by, and stare at, a section of the world of which you know nothing."

There is angry impatience, suppressed, but apparent still, in her voice and bearing. And without being conscious of the cause of it, Griffiths compassionates her largely.

"You are tired, Miss Aveland; it is quite time we went home."

Griffiths's cousin gives herself a little shake as he gives the order "home." She is antipathetic to Olive, and has been so from the first moment of her hearing that unconscious damsel's name. It seems to her now that Miss Aveland has given her a fair and tangible cause of animosity. How can that interloper be justified in the audacity which has made her suggest a move to Griffiths before either of his lawful relations have deigned to it? Griffiths is perfectly well acquainted with every signal of distress that is comprised in the cousinly code, and he understands well now that Olive has done violence to one of the family articles of faith, in his being their own legitimate property, to have and to hold. But though this knowledge pains him, for he is amiably desirous that every one should lovingly go into bondage to the girl he adores, Olive's worn, weary, burnout expression pains him far more, and renders him oblivious to everything but her wishes.

There is a room called the "young ladies' boudoir" in the house in which Olive chokes over her luncheon this day, and thither the cousin who had accompanied "mamma and Grif" on the expedition in quest of Olive wends her way with fleet footsteps, as soon as they reach home. "The girls" are all assembled here, for it is the place where the sewing-machine dwells, the place where all the excellent works of the Miss Wainwrights are carried on, in fact. Therefore here the tale of the delinquent Olive's audacity is carried, and she is torn to tatters.

"She had been flattering and fawning on Grif the whole way. Smiling with her eyes so!" (and the aggrieved Miss Wainwright depicts, as accurately as her inefficient eyes and brows will admit of her doing, the sunny, dancing smile which had beamed on Grif from Olive Aveland many times during this morning's drive); "and then she suddenly thought she would show us how fully her power is established, and how little she means to consult us; and we were ordered 'home' before I could recover my breath."

"She took that upon herself!" says one.

"She evidently knows nothing of society, and poor Grif must be saved from her in spite of himself."

"She must be taught her place, and Grif must be told what a fearful risk he will run if he places his happiness in the hands of a creature who tries to humiliate his relations—relations whom he really honors and esteems."

"We can settle all this by-and-by. Meanwhile, where is the girl? Under mamma's wing?" This from a practical Miss Wainwright, who believes in taking care of the present, and permitting the past and the future to look after themselves.

"I believe she's in the drawing-room with Grif!" several of them chortle, and then they flock away to the drawing-room, and find even, as their prophetic hearts had foreboded, that Grif and Olive are together, untrammeled by the presence of any third person.

Poor Grif! they really need not grudge him those five acid, penitential minutes that he has spent with her. Olive, like many another woman whose mind is surcharged with an impatient anxiety she can not share with any one, portrays that she is feeling it, by a manner that is alternately aggravatingly indifferent and irritatingly petulant. Griffiths, utterly unable to arrive at any natural and reasonable solution of the change that has come over her, accounts for it to himself in a thoroughly manly way.

"Poor thing, she must have a headache," he thinks compassionately, in his ignorance of the fact that a headache never exterminates the feminine desire to please with anything like the fell completeness of a heartache.

"Do you know, I don't think London air good for you at all," he says, depreciatingly; "you're not like the same girl you were at Halsworthy."

Olive, at this, rouses herself from a relapse into lassitude to say, with angry vigor,

"How should I be! I am older, consequently uglier, consequently less inclined to be satisfied with anything or anybody, including myself."

Wistfully he looks at her.

"You want change of scene and change of air; if you would only let my aunt propose a little plan we have thought of to you—"

Olive waves her hand impatiently to stop.

"I can't bear little plans that other people make; and, more than that, I know your aunt is quite guileless of making any little plans on my behalf; it would be kinder on your part, Mr. Poynter, to leave me to my own devices, than to prompt other people to worry me with suggestions that I won't attend to: what is it that you want me to do now?" she goes on, with human inconsistency.

"We thought—I thought, if you like—that a few weeks down at my place, with my aunt and cousins, might do you good: don't think that I would inflict my society on you, Miss Aveland," the good-natured fellow goes on, eagerly.

"You don't mean to say that you would be heartless enough to leave me to the tender mercies of your aunt and cousins, do you?" Olive laughs. "Why, they don't like me! Imagine my being cooped up in a country place with a band of girls who believe that I"
am trying to weave a web for your destruc-
tion."

"They can't think that!" Grif is scarlet at the bare thought of it, and almost paralyzed to
hear Olive alluding to a possibility that is so
precious to him, in such a matter-of-fact way.

"One never knows what jealous people think," Olive says, carelessly. "No, Mr. Poynter; when you have a nice, pretty wife to welcome me, I'll be your guest willingly
enough. I wonder what your wife will be like?
" she adds, with a slight increase of ani-
mation. "I should like to choose her."

"You're very kind," he says, in a mortified
tone. But Olive disregards his obvious repug-
nance to the subject, and goes on,

"I know so well the sort of girl to suit you,
much better than you know yourself, though
perhaps you don't think so; it would have been
a great mistake, if Madge had married you-
"

"It would," he interrupts, "for I shouldn't
have given dear Madge the love another wom-
an has won from me."

"And I should have been worse than a mis-
take, I should have been a ghastly error," she
goes on, with cutting emphasis. Then her
face softens and saddens, and she adds, almost
tenderly,

"Don't you see that I am wretched, Grif-
thats—wretched and uncertain, and afraid to
think of what I may have to bear. Don't you
add to my wretchedness by having a relapse;
let me drift quite away from you; it worries
me to think that you should take more thought
and trouble about me than—other people do."

These are her last words before his cousins
come to the rescue. They need not, in very
truth, grudge them those five miserable minutes.

The luncheon might be a funeral feast, for
the gloom that overspreads it. Griffiths is so
palpably dejected that his relations are justified
in their supposition that he has proposed to, and
been accepted by, Olive. It is a relief to ev-
ey one of them when the blissful moment ar-
ries for Olive to take her departure.

There is balm of Gilead still for the Miss
Wainwrights in the way in which Griffith re-
frains from offering to be Olive's escort. It
dispels their doubts. It relights the torch of
hope in their virgin hearts. It causes them
to be in charity with all men for an hour or
two, and emboldens to put a leading question
or two to moody, subdued Grif.

"Doesn't it strike you that there is some-
thing very odd in Miss Aveland's manner, Grif?—that cloak of reserve is one to conceal
something, depend upon it."

"If I were a man, I should so dread marry-
ing a girl who seemed to have a secret," the
practical Miss Wainwright observes. "When
I asked Miss Aveland, just now, how long she
should remain in London, she said there was
no more certainty about her future than there
is about the fate of a piece of thistle-down.
Fancy a woman confessing herself to be such
a mere foot-ball of fortune!"

"Did you say any thing to her, Grif, about
going down to the country with us?"

"Yes," Griffiths answers, curtly.

"And she—?"

"Most distinctly refused to go."

"Ah! Well, I'm glad she has so much
discretion; it would have been a most com-
promising step for you, and might have led to
remarks that would have made you feel as if
you ought to take a step that you never con-
templated; don't you agree with me, mamma?"

There is angry contempt on Griffith's face,
and his aunt is a wise woman.

"We may be quite sure, my dear, that your
cousin will never be hurried into any line of
conduct that is not most judicious; and as re-
gards Miss Aveland, I regret very much indeed
that we shall not have her society."

Poor Mrs. Wainwright has served a sharp
apprenticeship to the trade of watching the way
the wind blows!

CHAPTER XXXV.

BROKEN DOWN!

The Doctor, who has been in constant at-
tendance on Philip from the commencement
of the latter's illness, is coming down stairs hasti-
ly as Chrissy, stupefied by the news abruptly
rendered up to her by the hall-porter, stumbles
up. As he passes her, in utter unconsciousness
of her being the sister of his patient, words of
life fall from his lips upon the ears of the three
women who have just been crushed by the words
of doom.

"Stop that infernal chattering, for mercy's sake! If Mr. Fletcher is roused from his first
natural sleep, I'll charge the whole concern with
manslaughter."

He is a large-framed, hard-faced, ungainly
man; but to Madge he looks like an angel of
mercy, as he catches the waiter who is banging
the gong by the shoulder, and propels him sev-
eral yards away from that instrument of horror.
There is hope in his energetic manner; there is a promise of life in his wrath at the untoward
row! In another moment the prettiest girl Dr.
Vincent has seen for many a long day is lifting
an eager, supplicating face to him, as she ques-
tions him about Philip.

He is an elderly man, one who has been ac-
customed to witness every form and degree of
anxiety that the probable approach of death,
the destroyer, can cause. As he glances keen-
ly down into the upturned face, he words his
conviction:

"You are not his sister?"

"No, no; that was his sister you passed on
the stairs," Madge answers, impatiently; and
then Dr. Vincent scans her companion, Mrs.
Henderson, and says, coolly, it seems to them
both,

"Come into the saloon;" and as soon as he
has got them there, he cuts off all the rough
edges of his manner, and adds, very kindly,
Henderson has vivid recollections of the many vows she has made never again to assume any responsibility at all in connection with these two young people. But kindly-heartedness carries the day against prudence, as it is always meet and right that it should, and in place of the stern refusal which she ought to word, she says,

"Here! and ready to take up the burden of all that your being here means?"

"Yes—exactly; it won't be a burden though; don't look as if you were afraid that I am going to confer the honor of myself on any one who hasn't asked me."

So sped on her mission by Madge, Mrs. Henderson is arrested in it by meeting with Chrissy and the Doctor on the stairs. Chrissy is crying indistinctly, with the earnestness that is characteristic of the woman who has forcibly learned the lesson that it behooves her to do all things thoroughly. And over Doctor Vincent's hard visage there is spread a film of pity.

In her dread of it, in her repugnance to it, in her agonized sense of its being capriciously unjust, Mrs. Henderson craves eagerly for "news."

"What is it? tell me."

"We shall soon have that fine young fellow off the sick-list," the doctor says, cheerfully, pulling off his true expression as easily as if it had been a mask; and then, as he bowed good-bye to them, Chrissy becomes a mere inert mass of overwrought affectionate feeling, as she sob's out,

"He is better and will get over this; but how will he bear the truth I have just heard?"

"What is it? Chrissy, just listen! whatever tidings of sorrow you have to give, Madge Roden will suffer, in hearing them, more than any one else; remember that."

"Oh, how can I!" poor Chrissy cries, "I'm his sister, and have been proud of him from the day he began taking care of us; I can't remember the time he didn't take care of us; don't talk of any-one else's sorrow—I'm his sister."

"And you're overcome by learning that though he will live, he may be long in recovering?" Mrs. Henderson questions.

"No, no, not that; but who wouldn't be overcome by bearing that, though he will recover his health perfectly, please God, his brain will never be able to stand what it has stood? he must rest, and take things easily, the doctor said; and I know what that means; and Phil's brain-work has been his life."

"And it will be a large portion of his life again, when another portion of which you know nothing is made clear and straight before him." Then, in her fear that she has said too much—said enough to compromise Madge—Mrs. Henderson grows unreasonable and imperious after her own benevolent fashion.

"Go to your room at once, and stay there until I send for you; meanwhile I will stay with Phil."
"That's very kind, though the nurse seems a most excellent person, and I should think could be thoroughly trusted; but what will Miss Roden do?"

Clearly Chrissy has not quite comprehended that indiscreet statement about Madge suffering more than any one else, in hearing evil tidings of Phil. The sister's anxiety for her brother is of a sort that no other, no mere acquaintance of yesterday, such as Miss Roden is, can possibly have a share in, or understand in any way. "His brain-work has been his life," poor Chrissy says, pitiously. And in her heart she knows that it has been their life too. "The good son and brother!" She, knowing him well, knows how it will be with him when with returning health there will be no returning mental vigor. "Don't think me weak and ungrateful for him," she pleads, apologetically, "but he will think so much of mamma! Mabel and I are young and capable, but—mamma—"

She breaks off, briefly trying to wipe away the despondent tears that well out so quickly, and Mrs. Henderson, as it were, sweeps Chrissy away out of the public saloon to the room which she has apportioned to her.

"Crying, and a cold bath, and some dinner by-and-by, will refresh you, dear Chrissy; and as soon as you're refreshed, you'll scout the idea of your brother being one atom less able in any way than he ever has been; we will take care that he does not go into harness again too soon; now mind that you follow out all my directions; cry, by all means, if you like, but don't forget to dine."

Two minutes after this, Mrs. Henderson is bending down looking at the still sleeping man. The fever has raged over him like a burning blast. She marks that in a moment, as he lies there unconscious, but at rest, at ease, with the pores of his skin, and all his muscles and joints, relaxed again from that cruel, scorching strain which has been upon them so long. His hair has been shaved on the temples, and cut close all over his head. There are lines visible between the round of the cheek and the heavy, drooping mustache. The hand that lies outside the counterpane is attenuated and nerveless. He looks six or seven years older than he did the night of the Winstaple ball, when he came up to claim Madge for the promised few words that he had begged her to wait for. She realizes it all—all the inevitable changes that a furious fever of the mind and body make in a man. He has been through a fiery furnace, and the marks of it are still upon him. Whether they will ever be effaced under the sweet, softening influence of an atmosphere of satisfied love and freedom from anxiety, remains to be proved.

In her pitiableness for the avowed and acknowledged sufferer, she does not forget that unacknowledged one who is awaiting her below, in the gaunt, unhome-like looking saloon. And so she goes back to find Madge the object of much thought and consideration to the scattered groups who have come back from the table d'hôte, to spend a distrustful evening together.

Most of the current distrust is felt about Madge. Apparently, she, "a young and moderately good-looking girl," as more than one of her surveyors and assessors says to herself, "is here in this very public place alone." It has been remarked that she does not wear a wedding-ring, and that she does not appear desirous of apologizing for her existence, nor at all embarrassed by a sense of her solitude among them. Her clear, undrooping eyes rove over each one as he or she enters. And the majority of those who enter fidget under the gaze, and conceive an instantaneous and faint aversion to the gazer, unconscious of the fact that the self-possessed girl—who never, by so much as a gesture of impatience or nervousness, betrays that she is vibrating with anxiety—does not see any thing just now but a long future of remorseful misery for herself, if Phil should never come out of the valley of the Shadow of Death.

As Mrs. Henderson comes swiftly across from the door, Madge starts from her half-reclining position on a sofa, and asks aloud, without the slightest regard for other people being present, "How is he? does he know I am here?"

With half a glance, Mrs. Henderson takes in the meaning smiles that are being smiled to the right and left of her—takes them in, and smarts under them. But Madge does not even see them. "How is he?" she repeats, impatiently; "have you been talking to him all this long time you've been away?"

The answers are given with rapidity now. What there is to tell Mrs. Henderson tells quickly—the story tells as they go out and walk up and down the esplanade, between the hotel and the sea.

It is late, and the moon is sailing over the water, and millions of stars are brightening the sky, by the time the tale—told with many a tender interpretation and addition—has come to an end. And Madge hears it all in wraught silence, with downcast eyes and drooping head. For her "there is no light in heaven or earth," during the first few moments after the possibility, which is so appalling, has been put before her—the possibility that Phil may never be restored to those who love him, as those who love him must crave to see him.

"I have told you all the worst—the worst that may be," Mrs. Henderson says, after a long interval, during which poor Madge has kept silence with her lips, but has been crying aloud in her soul. "I have told you all the worst that may be; and now, Madge, what will you do? it will wear your spirit down, poor child, to stay here, and be told of hourly fluctuations which you may not witness; will you go home to-morrow, dear, and wait the issue?"

"No," Madge says; and she has to collect
all her strength to utter even that one word. But the utterance breaks the spell of mingled awe and pain which has been chaining her for several minutes. And presently she finds words to say,

"No; I will wait for him here. However he may come to me, whether as a lover or as a friend only, he shall know that I have not been ashamed to show the interest I feel in him. I will wait for him here."

"But, Madge," Mrs. Henderson begins protesting, as a dozen complications arise and present themselves in all their native ugliness before her mental vision; "has Phil never given you to understand clearly that he loves you? Is it a doubt of him that is weighing upon you? because, let me assure you, that he has told me—"

"Oh, he's told me ten times more than ever he can have told you, or any one else!" Madge interrupts; "it's no doubt of him as he was; it's the doubt that the doctor has put before us in awfully veiled language; it's the doubt that he may come out of this another man, with his love for me burned out of him, with lowered aspirations about every thing."

"Would you care for him still, if this possible worst were the case?" Mrs. Henderson asks.

"Care for him? Yes, to the end of my life, even if he's broken down more thoroughly than I'll let myself think he will be. I shall always find my hero in Phil; but he may remember that none of this would have happened, if I had not said some biting words one day, under a delusion. And, as he didn't know what my delusion was, those words may have rankled and corroded all care for me out of his heart."

"Then you wish to stay here?" Mrs. Henderson says, disregarding this burst. She knows that it is the offspring of keen, faithful, self-reproach which is exaggerating everything. "I've no doubt but that the dear child is picturing him to herself as a mild and melancholy incapable, to whom she may devote herself in her bloom and brightness, and so expiate her sin of non-acceptance of him at the first. Poor Madge! Thank Heaven, the reality in this case is likely to be far better than the romance. Still, she is right, in a measure. He will never be the 'man he was' again—though he may be something infinitely better and worthier."

"Yes; I wish to stay here. I promised his mother to write to her by every post, and I shall do it."

"And now it seems to me that supper would be better for you than moonlight, Madge."

"I think so, too," Madge answers, promptly, though all her being revolts at the idea of food until she has heard how he takes the news of her being near him of her own choice and will. So they turn and walk toward the entrance door; and as they gain it, a blaze of light falls upon a group that is entering by the opposite door, the one facing the town.

There is a certain sparkle and excitement about the ones who are coming in, and the manager and waiters who are revolving round them. An ordinary traveling party, apparently. A gentleman and lady—man and wife evidently, bride and bridegroom presumably—followed by a valet, and a maid, and a van-load of imperials and trunks.

The lady stands in the centre of the hall for a minute or two, waiting, while her husband gives directions to the manager. Madge's eyes rest listlessly on the new-comer, who is fair, slender, exquisitely dressed, and stooped in an atmosphere of self-satisfied consciousness. Her eyes meet Madge's with a half-looking of recognition, as the thought goes through her mind, "I've seen that face before." Then, as Madge passes on and goes up stairs, with no recognition in her eyes, the lady calls to her husband.

"Did you see that pretty girl who passed in, while you were speaking to that other man?" she says, as she passes her arm through his and he leads her on to the private sitting-room they have engaged. And then, as he answers "No," she adds, "I wish you would go back and find out who she is?—I know I've seen her before."

He speeds on his mission, and comes back with the intelligence that "the young lady is Miss Roden."

"Ah! then I have seen her face in Olive Aveland's photograph album," the lady says. Meanwhile, one or two pertinent questions are being asked both of valet and maid as to the reason why "the late arrivals, being, as they are, husband and wife, do not bear the same name?"

"My lady having the superior rank, as well as all the money, chooses to keep it to herself," the maid says; and the man further explains, very kindly and clearly,

"He haven't a brass farthing; my lady provides every thing for him, just as if he was a real swell—she provides me, and so, of course, she has her own way about her title, and quite right too."

"This young man belonged to the household in my late lord's time," the female portion of the domestic chorus graciously adds, as she reflects, "Who's to know here that he was only a 'sir'; my lady couldn't be called higher if he had been a lord."

"Only one of the 'household, eh?'" the man responds, thoughtfully; "really, now, there's no knowing what any of us may come to."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW OLIVE HEARS IT.

MADGE's departure leaves a very dull blank in Olive Aveland's life. The hours, filled, as they are, with the thoughts of Philip, and the expectation, which is continually being disappointed, of seeing him—drag heavily along. Sometimes, when the burden of them becomes
almost unbearable, the girl is half inclined to wish herself back in the uncongenial atmosphere of Barr and Battle’s show-room. But when his letters come, breathing, as they do, something of life in a higher social-scale, she rejoices that she is free of it and its associations, and prizes her £100 a year, which enables her to keep herself apart, more than ever, for Philip’s sake.

It is just about this time that Philip pays a visit to his relations in the little street in Chelsea, and hears, for the first time, of his cousin Phil’s serious illness.

Philip from his boyhood has been wont to come to these relations of his, and inflict either his high spirits or his low spirits upon them whenever it has pleased him. Further, he has never thought it necessary to offer the smallest explanation as to the cause of either. And though, in their sympathetic hearts, they have often yearned to know the reason why, they have been taught to refrain “from bothering him,” in a perfect way that does credit to his talent as a teacher.

It is a long, long time since they have seen him; and gloomy as he appears, they give him a cordial greeting, and then gup out with loving pain—with loving reliance on his perfect sympathy also—the story of Phil’s physical downfall. At the same time, with a delicacy he does not deserve, they abstain from making any mention of Madge Roden.

He has always been fond of his cousin, in a way; and now, at this juncture, he feels specially affected by the ill news concerning him.

“There is always some hitch or other in every thing that concerns me,” he says complainingly. But they, Phil’s mother and sister, forgive the selfishness of his complaint; for they notice that his face has blanched and his eyes reddened when he hears of Phil’s extremity.

“Tell us about yourself, Philip,” Mabel suggests; “don’t think that our misery about Phil makes us careless of you, dear; it did grieve us so much when we saw Sir John Tollington’s death! such a nice appointment as you found it; and appointments are so hard to get—”

She pauses suddenly, arrested in her sympathetic prosings by a queer expression of mingled amusement and embarrassment which flits over Philip’s face.

“I’m not thinking about another appointment,” he says, hesitatingly. “I’ve come to tell you something which you’ll be very glad to hear, I know. I am going to marry Lady Tollington; and you may congratulate me very warmly, for I am a very lucky fellow, I can tell you.”

“My dear Philip! I do indeed,” bursts from them both. But somehow there is, unintentionally, more amazement than delight in their accents, for Philip’s face belies his words when he says he “is a very lucky fellow.”

Mabel presses him with questions presently, and he answers them with a fair amount of enthusiasm. “She looks quite young,” he says, refraining from dating her ladyship, “very fair and delicate looking; she’s considered a remarkably pretty woman, and no one can doubt her attachment to me, for she will gain nothing by the move.”

“She has a little money, then,” Mrs. Fletcher remarks, in a tone of pleased surprise; “I am glad to hear it. Naval men, as a rule, can’t leave their wives very well off.”

“She has one of the finest properties in the Highlands,” Philip says, trying not to let his voice ring with exultation, “besides a good income from funded property.”

“When shall we see her, Philip?” Mabel asks, anxiously.

Philip winces. “Well, to tell the truth, she rather wishes the engagement to be kept quiet just at present. You see Sir John has not been dead the traditional twelve months that are conventionally devoted to widowed despair; and the world is so narrow-minded it won’t remember how unnatural it would be for May to mourn for December in reality.”

“Then you won’t be married just yet?”

“In about a fortnight,” Philip says, awkwardly. “When once we are married, every one may hear of it; but we both rather wish to be spared the preliminary pulling to pieces.”

“Then we shall not see Mrs. Philip Fletcher, I suppose, until you come back to town, after your bridal tour?”

Now it must be understood that though Philip’s affection for these relatives of his does not equal theirs for him, he has a thorough and perfect respect for their integrity, their honorable conscientiousness, and their just judgment. He is desperately deficient in all these qualities himself, but he respects them in “his people.” Further, he has a hearty, thorough, deep-seated contempt for his bride-elect. And so he has no desire to submit himself to the ordeal of their meeting with and sounding her.

Accordingly, he says,

“Town won’t see me till next season, I fancy; then, of course, we shall look you up directly we arrive; we go west first, and then on the continent for a few weeks, and we shall try the winter at Auchtarroch.”

“Is that the name of her place, Philip?” Mabel asks. And on the subject of the property Philip waxes eloquent. He can speak of Auchtarroch and the money that is in the funds without fear or shame.

“Well,” Mabel says, when her cousin has made a ground-plan of the Auchtarroch property on the table, with books and reels of cotton, for their benefit, “I shall write and offer my cousinly congratulations to your bride the day you’re married. I’ll be one of the first to wish her joy under her new name, Philip!”

“She won’t have a new name,” Philip says, stumbling over his words, and upsetting the plan of Auchtarroch by pushing his chair back suddenly and jerking the table, “she will still keep her title—be Lady Tollington!”

“Oh! why? he was only a knight,” Mabel
"HE COMETH NOT,' SHE SAID."

"I am sure the name of Fletcher is as good as that of Tollington," Mrs. Fletcher says, flushing rosy red at the intended slight to the family patronymic. "I'm sure, if I were in your case, Philip, I would not agree to my wife bearing another man's name."

Philip gets up petulantly: it is always a temper-trying thing to have other people wording your feelings, when you have already proved yourself powerless to get those feelings attended to.

"Never mind his having been only a knight, Mabel; I think, aunt, that I am bound to concede—such a trifle too—to a woman who gives so much and will get only my worthless self in return." Then he stoops to kiss them both and say "good-bye," and they understand pretty well that they are seeing the last of Philip—for he will want nothing more of them.

During the fortnight that follows this announcement, Lady Tollington, whose town circle is not a large one, drags her handsome young betrothed round it until he is giddy. But he reels along without a single demur. His time will set in when the vows are spoken, and the ring is on. Lady Tollington's airs of being a great enchantress will die a sudden death then, though he submits to them patiently enough now, for he has no intention of seeing Auehtarchoe slip through his fingers, as the Moorbridge property did. His greatest trouble, as he is whirled along, is that Olive may see him.

At last, he has the common humanity to cease writing to Olive. Purposely he has filled his two latest letters with misty allusions to "inevitable changes," and "stern necessities." But he has been unable (he is as great a coward as he is a liar) to tell her what the change is, and why he makes it. "She will hear it soon enough," he tells himself, and his false heart aches as he pictures that woman's anguish when she does hear it.

The marriage-day comes, and Lady Tollington, in the midst of all the excitement of dressing, has time to write one letter. Her dress is just as gray as a pearl! ("No one shall say I was absurd enough to be married a second time in white," she says to her maid), and this dress is covered with Mechlin lace, that falls about her in such graceful folds as to make her appear a very pretty woman when she practices "the glide" up the centre of Saint George's.

She is rather particular about this letter. She will not trust it to the post, but sends it by private messenger, just before she goes to the church. "And be sure he leaves word that I was on the point of starting to be married when I wrote it!" she says, giving a final direction; "if one does a Christian thing, do it thoroughly."

The bridal pair need not be followed. The letter and its recipient are far more interesting. Olive is sitting alone, alone as usual, alone with her own dreary thoughts, when that letter is handed to her. A golden monogram gleams at her from the envelope. A golden crest and quarterings, and motto, flame at her from the top of the epistle. A heavy perfume diffuses itself from the paper generally as she opens it, and reads,

"MY DEAR MISS AVELAND,—Since my late lamented husband's death, I have thought deeply on the subject of our mutual misunderstanding. The death of a friend purifies and clears the mind. I see now that we misjudged each other; and as I desire to be at peace with every one on this happy day, I write to tell you that you have my best wishes for your future happiness and prosperity. Doubtless you will have heard from Philip of our engagement? he has, I know, a sincere friendship for you. We ratify this engagement this morning. I pen these lines just before starting for Saint George's, Hanover Square. By the time you read this, I shall be Philip Fletcher's wife. But if you write to congratulate me, address me as 'Lady Tollington.' I retain my title.

"Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

"JULIE TOLLINGTON."

She reads every word of it. More than this, she fully takes in the meaning of every word. And then for an hour!—Heaven help us, too many of us go through such hours as these. There is no need to write about them.

At the end of that hour she moves from the position she has never altered once during all the time, and the words,

"She hath a devil," fall from her lips.

Some few days after this, as Olive is trying to make out what she will do with the rest of her life, Griffiths Poynter comes in.

"Of course it's you," she says, scarcely turning her head, but putting out her hand instantly (he notices that) to welcome him; "of course, it's you; no one else would come at the right time."

"Have I come at the right time? Olive—"

"Oh don't think that, please," Olive interrupts; "I mean that no one but you would come just when I was wanting to speak to a fellow-creature about what I am to do with my life."

"What you're to do with it!" he repeats, wonderingly.

"Yes—don't look perplexed; it's quite a common occurrence, I assure you, that a woman should feel the need of a definite plan of life while she lives, however little she may desire to live at all. Griffiths!" she adds, suddenly handing him the letter which Lady Tollington so carefully constructed on her bridal day. "Griffiths! read that; the man she speaks of is the man I have loved ever since I was capable of loving any one outside the circle of my relations and my dolls; read that! and then tell me what I can do with what's left of my life."
He reads it in a paroxysm of pity, love, and indignation. And when he has finished it, he says—nothing!

"Why don't you speak?" she asks, presently.

"There is nothing left to say," he says, humbly.

"I knew that. There is nothing left to say, and there is nothing left to do; and still I shall go on for perhaps another forty years; isn't it awful?"

Roused out of all the reticence he has been vowing to observe, Griffiths is goaded into saying,

"Forget the hound! how can you allow yourself to believe that you'll go on thinking about him?"

"Why don't you forget me?—why do you allow yourself to think so kindly of me still, that you keep on trying to comfort and me, and do me good? why do you do it?—you're weaker than I am, for I never even pretended to love you, and Philip did—does love me with his whole heart."

"Oh, Olive!" he says, pleadingly, "why will you speak these horrible truths? they're not 'truths' either, for if you were married, dear, I'd never allow myself to think of you; while now I love you so, that I'll ask you, pray you, to let me take care of the life you value so lightly—"

"What a pity it is I can't do it!" she interrupts. "I know that it would be such a comfortable arrangement, and I know that I should always like you, into the bargain, Griffiths; but I wouldn't marry a man I disliked even, much less you; and after all, what is it?" she strives to say, calmly. "I shall only add one more to the long list of thrown-aside women; do believe me, it's all over."

"I do believe you," she says; and then he goes away to follow out his path in life, which will from this moment diverge widely from hers.

"At least, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have been candid with him throughout," she thinks, as she hears his footsteps reverberating for the last time on the staircase; "but he is my last friend."

The woman who says these words is in the bloom of her youth, and has probably (as she has just suggested) a long lease of life before her still. As we look at her, her young head bent in dogged, faithful, despairing regret, let us remember, pitifully, that this life will in all human probability be spent alone. For the only one whose advent could rejoice her can never come to Olive Aveland.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

INTO THE SILENT FOOL.

A soft, low-lying purple haze hangs over everything; it has been intensely hot all day, and the evening breeze has not sprung up yet. By-and-by, when the sun (now making a sea of heather on fire in the west) has quite set, it will be refreshing, but just now the air is caressing and lulling, rather than bracing, and one likes to be silent and still in it.

They are on the borders of Exmoor again, and Exmoor is in great glory now. The purple heather, and the war-like pink heath, are clothing every bit and boulder of the great uncultivated moor; the streams are swollen by the late rains, and the bracken is beginning to change to that golden brown which harmonizes so well with the purple heather.

Phil Fletcher has advanced so far toward recovery as to be at the stage of being considered invalid enough to be the chief object of consideration to all his friends, and well enough to avail himself of their attentions. But this stage, so delightful to a woman, is one that speedily falls upon a man. In short, Phil is still sufficiently ill to need a great deal of attention, and sufficiently well and true to his sex to be worried by it.

The old order of things, the order that had been established just before Madge and Phil went forth on that riding expedition, during which the scales fell from their eyes concerning each other, was re-established now, just as though it had never been interrupted. Once more Madge is back in her own home, regulating the daily round of life in Moorbridge House, as she always has regulated it since first she took the reins into her own hands; and once more Phil is the Hendersons' guest; and once more it is an understood thing that the occupants of the two houses are to be rarely apart.

Chrissey has gone back to her home duties, for Phil no longer has need of the sisterly care and devotion which Chrissey gave him, and which has made Chrissey very dear to Madge Roden. And so, once more the two young people are necessarily thrown together a great deal; but still, wonderfully as he has rallied, Phil has evidently not quite recovered his former energy yet. He accepts the fact of being almost perpetually in Madge's presence with evident pleasure, but he does not take advantage of it. As he says himself sometimes to Mrs. Henderson, "All he desires now is to rest on his oars until he dare venture out to sea again." Of course, he says this openly in reference to the exertion of that brain-power which has failed him once, but it applies to other adventures also. Of all the shipwrecks which he dreads, a repetition of that one where-in he was so badly battered on the observatory, would be the worst for him.

From the first moment of his convalescence at Ilfracombe, he has been accustomed to see Madge's graceful figure and Madge's blithe face about him. He is accustomed to be the recipient of dainty kindnesses and attentions from her that the others never think of rendering him. "It is her nature to be kind, and to try to give pleasure. If the pleasure she gives
this man is a little too exquisite, she is not to blame; she merely obeys her instincts—shines and dazzles him; but though he is dazzled, he is not going to presume on his privileges again." He tells himself these truths often, and his heart forebodes that when the exquisite pleasure ceases, a more exquisite pain will be his portion.

He has heard from Mrs. Henderson of Madge’s anxiety and sympathy for him and with his people, when the news of his illness first reached her. But Mrs. Henderson has been careful to tell the tale calmly, and in a matter-of-course way. "It was too kind of you both to come down with my sister," Phil had said, when the recital came to a close. And Mrs. Henderson had merely answered, "My dear boy, considering all things, I could have done no less, and Madge couldn’t have remained in London without me."

Phil was not in the mood at this time to take advantage of, or even to be made hopeful by, any thing like encouragement on the subject of his love. But it did dishearten him to hear this solution given of the sweet mystery Madge’s being there had been to him. It disheartened him so, that at first he refused Mrs. Henderson’s invitation to go back to Halsworthy with her. He knew himself that "it would be useless for him even to put his fate to the touch again; he had no intention of ever doing so; still, to have the inutility of any thing of the kind pointed out to him was hard—and was unnecessarily hard."

Nevertheless, when the time came, he did go back to Halsworthy, where he is this gorgeous August day, reading a letter he has just received from his cousin Philip.

A fortnight ago Phil heard of his cousin’s marriage, from one of his sisters; but up to the present time he has said nothing about it. He has an undefined idea that Madge Roden will not like to hear of it; and though Madge Roden is nothing to him—never can be any thing to him—he shrinks (not unnaturally) from the thought of seeing her pain’d by another man’s marriage.

But this letter makes him comprehend clearly that he can shun the subject no longer. Philip tells his cousin in an affectedly easy way (Phil almost fancies he sees the falsity of that ease in the wavering strokes of the pen that has, palpably, not been the pen of a ready writer) that "Lady Tollington has expressed such a desire to see that part of Exmoor that he (Philip) does not feel justified in permitting any associations of his own to thwart her."

"Look out for us, therefore, in a day or two," he concludes; "I know there is a decent inn in Halsworthy—and I know that Miss Roden is far too sensible a girl to imagine that there is any thing like a vaunt in my coming."

Phil is sitting on a chair on the Henderson’s lawn, as he reads this; and just as he comes to a conclusion, Mrs. Henderson strolls slowly out from the dining-room window and comes across to join him.

"Your correspondence absorbs you this morning, Phil," she says. And then she ventures on to a topic that has never been broach’d since his illness: "Are you behindhand with ‘copy,’ poor boy, and are they worrying you?"

"Oh no!" Phil answers, quite cheerfully, in a way that makes Mrs. Henderson’s heart thump with relief. "I got into harness some days ago, and—there’s not such a demand for me," he adds, with a laugh, "that I need burst my brains to supply it."

"Got into harness some days ago—wasn’t that rather soon—wasn’t it rash?"

She asks it with a ring of such genuine anxiety in her voice that Phil, instead of answering "Oh no! I don’t think so" (in a way that half admits the accusation, as people usually do who are charged with rashness in a friendly way), says,

"What makes you say that?—you’re not a croaker from an empty sense of civility."

"No, I am not; I mean it thoroughly. I put it to your common sense, Are you not rash in flinging yourself into arduous brain-work again before your brain has properly recovered its spring and balance?"

"I hope not," he says, gravely; "I understand what you mean, and fear, now: don’t think me idle rash; I know that it has been touch and go with me. Mrs. Henderson, the pressure upon me for the last few months has been intolerable; it is well for me that I gave way physically; it was inevitable that there should be a crash somewhere; you see, I fell into the whirl of feeling that, if I paused for a moment—if I was not at the wheel constantly—there would be wreck and confusion in my life; and not in my life only, but in the lives of others; that was one cause—"

"And there was another?" Mrs. Henderson interpoes.

"There was; but I’m not going to talk of that now: don’t distress yourself about me. I’m out of the whirl; the enforced inaction and quiet of the last few weeks have wrought the good work of teaching me that I shall do more if I go at it coolly than if I work at white-heat; but work I must—you know that."

"Having got him on the topic, she, with a woman’s adroitness, keeps him to it, till she has got him to express his regret that he should ever have been led into the folly of relinquishing his clerkship and trusting wholly to literature and tutoring for a livelihood. And, at last, he adverts to another folly.

"It wasn’t disappointed ambition that made me lose my head eventually," he says; "I made a mistake one day when I was here last, and Miss Roden acted the part of a true friend, and told me of my fault and folly in a way that in curing pretty nearly killed."

"Madge told me she had made a mistake in imagining you to be engaged to Miss Westcott," Mrs. Henderson says, quietly. Then she resolves that she will not add another ingredient to the potent charm of that statement, but
will let it seethe and seethe in his mind, undiluted with any minor matter. So she turns from the topic with easy determination, just as he feels that it would be Paradise to pursue it.

"You waved your letter at me when I came up in a way that made me think there was something in it that I was to hear?"

"So there is: Philip has married Lady Tollington."

"That woman whose husband died two or three months ago?"

"The same: I heard of it from Chrissay a fortnight ago, but I didn't care to speak of it; and here's worse to follow: he writes to me himself now, saying that they are coming here in a few days: how will Miss Roden take it?"

"Madge is too well-bred to show her contempt for them; you needn't be alarmed, either on their account or hers."

"It's the woman making him come—I'm sure of that," Phil says, waxing wrath; "I can't stop them—the inn is open to man and beast; Miss Roden will be justified in thinking Iowly indeed of the Fletcher family."

"She never will identify you with your cousin in any way, be sure of that," Mrs. Henderson says. And then she adds, impressively, "The difference between you two men was clear to Madge at a time when it must have given her pain—at a time when she was paying the penalty of my mistake and her own; don't distress yourself about what Madge will feel in seeing your cousin."

There is more satisfaction for Phil after this, in his rides with Madge Roden. There is more satisfaction for him in the frank, unaffected way in which she shows her pleasure in his society, and her joy in his rapidly returning health. Those bitter words of hers that had rankled in his mind so long, had been uttered under a delusion! She had believed him to be engaged to great, good-natured Miss Westcott, and the belief had made her bitter. There is no longer pain and humiliation to Phil in the memory of them, now that he knows the cause of them.

She hears the news of Philip's marriage with Lady Tollington with an amount of incredulity that startles Phil for a while. He cannot help feeling that her unwilling belief—her surprise—her evident distress—betokens some smouldering fire of regard for Philip. But presently she undeceives him.

They are alone, riding through the blooming purple heather, as she does it, on the free wild border of the moor. As they pull up on the brow of a slope, and look away over the wide expanse of undulating ground, the desire to be as open as the scene possesses her.

"Shall I tell you why I am heart-sore and horrified to hear of Philip's marriage with Lady Tollington?" she asks, laying her whip on his arm to command his attention.

"Heart-sore!" The words hurt him.

"Yes—so heart-sore, and hurt! Oh, Phil, I don't think even you will understand how I dread what is before me! I shall have to tell this news to some one else who may die of it."

Her own voice melts into tears as she says this. And then clearly, sadly, and mercifully, she tells him the story of Olive Avaland and his cousin.

They grow very sympathetic and confidential over the plans for the preservation of every body's peace of mind, and finally Madge says:

"I tell you what it is, Phil! as soon as Lady Tollington (disguising of a woman not to call herself by her husband's name) is tired of exhibiting her last purchase here—as soon as ever they are gone, you must go up and bring Olive down to me: she shall see more of Griffiths Poynter; she shall learn how much better he is worth living for than Philip is worth dying for."

This is the last definite plan they make this afternoon, before going home. The next morning's post brings a letter that upsets it altogether.

Madge is the recipient of this letter, and with a sorrowful face and a throbbing heart she takes it to Mrs. Henderson and Phil at once.

"Read it," she says, sobbing; "what shall we do?"

The letter is from Olive. It is very simple, very short, very eloquent of the girl's smarting condition.

"DEAR MADGE,—You have told me often to come to you in any trouble. My trouble is come now, in the shape of the feeling that I'm utterly desolate. I shall be at Moorbridge House to-morrow, if you will have me. I'm not dying, but I have neuralgia in the soul and mind and heart. Will you have me?"

"Your affectionate Olive."

"She knows it," Phil says; "you will be spared that; you will not have to tell her; she knows it already."

"But she may see him here—don't you see the new misery?" Madge cries.

"She must not see him; we must all combine to avoid that complication," Phil says, quickly. "I should think that a word to Philip, when he comes, will be sufficient to send him straight away again."

"It won't be sufficient to send Lady Tollington straight away again," Madge says, with an impatient shake of her head. "I have heard something of her from Olive already; she is a clever fool."

"One thing is certain; as we don't know where they are, we must wait until they come here, to make an appeal to their better feelings, if they have any; besides, let us hope that we are magnifying the evil; Olive, when she comes under our influence, may be persuaded to find her hero in Griffiths Poynter," Mrs. Henderson says, hopefully. But Madge
only shakes her head more despondingly than before: she has heard Olive speak of Philip, and the hope Mrs. Henderson has put forth does not lighten Madge's breast for a moment.

It is late in the afternoon of the day following this on which this discussion took place, when Olive reaches the haven of peace she has selected. Madge meets her at the little roadside hostelry, where the coach horses bait, and carries her back in the little snug brougham to Moorbridge House. There is nothing wanting in the tender thoughtfulness of Madge's manner. There is nothing wanting in the hearty, fond welcome she gives this poor, sad girl, who is so pitifully conscious of her weakness, and so utterly powerless to combat it. "You know that he is married!" are the first words Olive finds breath to utter. And Madge knows that she can say nothing!—nothing that will, by any chance, alleviate this woman's pain.

Olive soon learns that Phil, that cousin Phil "of whom in the old days she heard so much, but whom she has never seen, is staying at the Hendersons". And she soon learns something else concerning him, though Madge says nothing more. "Her hero has come," poor Olive thinks, after looking wistfully at her bright-faced friend for a few moments. And then she feels she should like to see him.

"Madge, dear," she says, "let us walk down to Mrs. Henderson's—dear, kind, Mrs. Henderson—I want to see her as soon as possible."

Madge assents; indeed, she rather catches at the idea. It is well that Olive should go there this evening, for after to-morrow her progress through the village might be an unsafe one, and liable to painful interruption. Accordingly, they put on their hats, and white-faced Olive wraps a silver-gray cloud over her shoulders and the thick, dull black silk dress (which had been of great efficacy in "showing off" various splendors at Barr and Battle's, and which she now wears in memory of the uncle who has left her £100 a year), and they saunter slowly down through the grounds to the village. Then they go through the village street a little more hurriedly, and presently find themselves in the Vicarage garden, where Mrs. Henderson greets them with the words, "My girl, I was coming up to you with Phil; why did you drag Olive out to-night, Madge?"

It seems to Madge that Mrs. Henderson has some communication to make, that she is trying to send a telegram from her own eyes to Madge's mind. But bewildered Madge can make nothing of it. Olive has the eye of a falcon, and sees presently what is going on.

"Do you want to speak to Madge alone?" she asks, abruptly, and Mrs. Henderson is so overwhelmed by the suddenness of the question, and by many other things, that she says, "Oh no; I was only afraid you were sitting in a draught."

"And didn't like to let me see that you thought I required care. My dear Mrs. Henderson, if I heard any one discuss the size of my coffin, and the quality of my shroud, it would have no effect on me."

"But this is morbid, Olive!"

"Morbid! it may: I only know it's the case; it would have no effect on me, for I don't think for a moment that I shall die for many a long year. I've a weary time to go through yet; I am young and strong—just as strong as I was when I was happy; my pale face means nothing; I am really strong. I may sit in this draught with impunity."

There is something in the quiet recklessness of the girl's tone and manner that actually hurts those who are listening to her. For diversion's sake, Madge says, "Where is Phil? I have told Olive that he is here."

"Gone out," is the brief answer.

"Let us go on your lovely lawn," Olive says, rising up and passing out through the window; "how exactly it all is like what it used to be when I was here before, and my sorrow was sleeping. Oh, what sense and mercy there is in those words, 'When sorrow sleepeth, wake it not.' Mine has been roused up effectually; and oh, dear me, how many weary years it will have to be awake—I am so young and strong."

Her words are not such as incline one to answer them. Therefore her two companions keep silence till they find themselves on the lawn. But Madge has managed to slip her hand through Olive's arm, and give her a pressure that is as full of human love and sympathy as the most eloquent words could be.

"Look at my Osmunda regalis," Mrs. Henderson says, pointing out a flourishing group of the royal monster fern. "That dull, silent pool that I hated so much when I came here first, is turning out the most ornamental spot in my garden, now that it is fringed with these ferns. I used to be so dreadfully afraid that my children would tumble in; but, now they're growing up, its banks are the favorite family resort."

"So I should think," Olive says, "judging from the well-worn appearance of the rustic chairs." And then they all seat themselves on these chairs, which are placed on the smooth, elastic turf, close to the edge of the pond, and amuse themselves with looking at the reflection of the stars as they flash out in the motionless, dark waters.

"It's sweet enough to induce one to sit here all night," Madge says; "nevertheless, as soon as Phil comes in, he must be our escort home."

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Meanwhile the Halsworthy Inn is in a state of chaos. Lady Tollington and Mr. Fletcher have arrived, with their man and maid; and these two are making life a horrible burden to the flustered landlady, by their dissatisfaction. Maddened by their complaints and suggestions, the worthy woman forgets her cunning, and
over-seasons some viands, and under-cooks others, and finally serves up a complete failure of three courses to a hungry, tired, and irritable pair.

"I shall not stay in this hole to be starved," Lady Tollington says, in fiery tones, as the last remnants of the ill-starred feast vanish from the table.

"The sooner we go, the better I shall be pleased," her husband rejoins; "you may do me the favor of remembering that I was opposed to coming here from the first."

"Absurd sentimentality, and false too," Lady Tollington says, in a white rage, rising and going to the window. "You're weak enough; I know that; but I am not going to believe that you're weak enough to have any feeling left for this Miss Roden, who threw you off like an old glove directly she was tired of you, and had seen your cousin."

As Philip does not answer her, she is about to turn round with an unmistakable scowl on her fair, tired-looking face. But before she can do it, her glance is arrested by the sight of Olive Aveland and another young lady walking down the street. She gazes at once that they are going to the Vicarage, to see that Mrs. Henderson of whom Philip has made frequent mention. And she resolves that she too, and Philip, shall follow with little delay.

Accordingly, a smile is the mask she wears, instead of a scowl, when she does turn round.

"Philip," she begins, with the fawning air she can adopt at a moment's notice, "forgive my petulance; hunger is gnawing every bit of the curtsey out of me; accept the amende I am going to make: take me to see your friend, Mrs. Henderson?"

Philip has nothing reasonable to urge against this request. He has not seen that graceful figure in the gray cloud; therefore he infinitely prefers the idea of going and having a pleasant evening at the Vicarage with Mrs. Henderson and his cousin Phil, and possibly Madge Roden, to that of spending the evening alone with his spouse in a dull village inn. One very soon comes to the end of vivacions, vain Lady Tollington. And having come to the end of her, one has not the faintest desire to retrace one's steps.

Accordingly, when the stars come out and jewel the skies, Lady Tollington puts on a youthful hat, and a "real cashmere," and Philip attends her with a careless indifference as to what will happen next, that will never be his portion again.

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The talk between the three women on the border of the silent, black pool often flags; but they sit on contentedly; for there is a certain pleasurable sense of rest to each one of them in being together in this way. Madge is by far the most silent of the three, and when she does speak it is only to wonder "Why Phil has not come back yet." When she has expressed this wonder several times, she feels that an explanation is due to Olive. "Phil and I are going to be married soon," she says; and then she goes on to inform Olive that as he is going to the Bar, his time must be principally spent in London. "And Aunt Lucy won't be dull at all, because, luckily, Phil's mother and sisters have agreed to come and live at Moorbridge House; and we shall run down whenever Phil can spare time, for he won't let me be away from my kingdom long."

"Dear Madge," Olive says, affectionately, "how good it is when the real Happy Prince comes at last, instead of at first." And then she goes on to talk freely with Madge of the latter's future, until it seems to both her hearers that her own heart has grown lighter.

The stars keep on breaking out on the surface of the dark pool in greater beauty each moment, and the reflection of a splendid one gets broken and shattered into a myriad diamonds by the light ripple that is caused by the movement of the big fronds of the royal fern. In order to watch it, Olive draws her chair nearer and nearer to the edge, and Mrs. Henderson comes out, and they are all as much interested in the heavenly bodies as if there were no such things as false and absent lovers in the world.

Presently, through the still night air the parlor-maid's voice comes to them, saying, "My mistress and the young ladies are out on the lawn, sir;" and now figures loom tall as they approach them in the starlight, and presently Philip Fletcher is in their midst, saying,

"I have brought my wife to introduce to you, Mrs. Henderson."

It is all so sudden, it is so much like an awful nightmare, from which, if she moves, she may free herself, that Olive does move, and does free herself, poor thing.

Forgetful of the water that is behind her, as she has turned her head to see him coming, she rises, steps back, and then there is a dull clashing sound in the pool, and Olive is no longer one of them.

Cry upon ery is raised, for the pool is known to be terribly deep, and the stars are twinkling confusedly on its broken surface. Philip Fletcher has not seen the face of the woman who has disappeared, but in the midst of the panic he only is prompt. He has sprung in before he knows what he is springing after.

Vain assistance is rendered to him by those who rush frantically round the margin, declaring that they are sure "she is rising there." When she does rise, it is far from the spot any one has indicated; and when Philip, nearly exhausted himself, bears her to the bank in his arms, it is a dead face that the stars look down upon.

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"Such an awful thing to have happened on our wedding-tour," Lady Tollington says; "quite like a bad omen. I'll never come near the West of England again." Lady Tollington
looks quite old as she says this to Mrs. Henderson, a day or two after the occurrence—old, and worn, and disappointed. And Mrs. Henderson, who does not know all the facts of the case, pities the living wife, who knows that she will never have a place in her husband's heart, more than she does the dead love, who has done with all the toil and endeavor now.

"For after all," as Madge says to Phil, the day before their own marriage, "he came to her at the last; she knew (I like to feel sure of that) that he was trying to save her."

THE END.