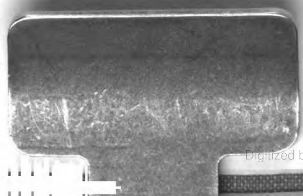

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THE
C O U N T E S S I D A .

A T A L E O F B E R L I N .

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"NORMAN LESLIE," "DREAMS AND REVERIES OF
A QUIET MAN," &c.

L. S. 7. 1840

I N T W O V O L U M E S .

V O L . I .

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TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

HENRY WHEATON,

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AT THE COURT
OF BERLIN,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS SINCERE AND GRATEFUL FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THERE are several unimportant anachronisms in these volumes. The Berlin park, at the time referred to by the story, was not the exquisite promenade it is at present; nor has any attempt been made to paint the local costume or manners of the period. It has been rather the intention of the writer to illustrate a *principle*, and to record his protest against a useless and barbarous custom; which, to the shame of his own country, exists there in a less modified form than the good sense and good taste of European communities, to say nothing of their moral and religious feelings, would sanction elsewhere.

Berlin, January, 1840.

THE
C O U N T E S S I D A .

CHAPTER I.

It was on a pleasant October evening, in the year 1790, that the public diligence which ran between Hamburg and Berlin drew up in the evening at the post of the former town preparatory to starting. The clock struck nine. The four strong horses clattered with their heavy hoofs against the pavement, as if impatient to be off. The conducteur blew an inspiring blast upon his horn, and a small but observant circle of by-standers were collected to gaze on the company of passengers, and the animated scene in which they formed the principal actors. The travellers for the night, who appeared to take their places, were only five in number. The officer of the post, to whom it was committed to superintend the departure of the vehicle and its occupants, appeared with a light, a pen behind his ear, and a paper in his hand.

“Number one,” exclaimed he.

We shall take the liberty here, as during the progress of our story, to render, without apology, into our own language whatever conversation we may have to impart.

At the call of “number one,” a young man of apparently five-and-twenty stepped from the surrounding groups. His umbrella and cane were thrust into the netting suspended from the roof of the vehicle ;

a book, which he had carried under his arm, was placed in one of the pockets; and he concluded by depositing his own person in the right-hand corner of the back seat, usually deemed the best in the carriage. During these proceedings, the young man, by the light of a lamp, underwent an attentive scrutiny from the spectators, particularly that portion destined to be his *compagnons de voyage*. He was a person of a good appearance and an agreeable enough countenance. He wore a not very handsome cloak, but one which had a warm and serviceable look; and he was no sooner seated than, relieving himself from a travelling cap of blue cloth, he exchanged the same for a stout white cotton nightcap, which gave him a comfortable but not very romantic appearance. It was easy to perceive that, although a young man, he was an old traveller; and even such of the by-standers as counted upon passing the night in a good bed could scarcely help envying him the manner in which he arranged himself for his nocturnal journey.

The official's call for "number two" brought forth a lady, respecting whom nothing more definite could be discovered than a goodly equipage of muff, veil, and cloak—making the *tout ensemble* of a female apparently neither young nor old, but of a respectable rank in life. Her effects had been already placed, and she assumed her seat without delay.

A call for "number three, four, and five," brought into the foreground an English-looking individual of the male gender, as might be particularly seen by his whiskers. A lady hung on each arm. The audience, who silently watched the progress of affairs, gathered nothing more from the appearance of these than that they were travellers well wrapped up from the cold, that they spoke the English language, and that the name of him of the nobler sex was "John." From the frequent and familiar manner in which the epithet was applied by one of his fair companions,

in the various remarks which she found it agreeable to make, she was probably his wife, sister, or near relative; though they among the spectators accustomed to such observations were, from a certain asperity in her tone and manner, rather inclined to set her down as the first.

The passengers were at length all seated. The doors were slammed to; the conducteur mounted to his place; the blast of the horn broke above all other noises; the renewed clattering of the horses' hoofs against the pavement was followed by seven heart-rousing cracks of the whip; and the "*bon voyage*" of the dignitary, whose labours were thus happily completed, was scarcely heard in the general clamour.

The diligence dashed on with a thundering noise. Our fellow-travellers were sometimes visible to each other for a moment by the glare of a street lamp or an illuminated shop-window, and sometimes in utter darkness. At length the softened sound of the wheels made it apparent that they were off the pavement, and offered an opportunity of conversation to such as desired it. "Numbers one and two" seemed, for the present, disposed to enjoy their reveries in silence. The others were less taciturn. The person who has already been introduced to the reader as "John," made many exclamations of anger, which were joined in by a hard, sharp female voice. The cause seemed to be an overcharge in the bill, or what at least they deemed such, at their hotel in Hamburg. The gentleman's dissatisfaction was directed against the *maitre d'hotel* and the waiters, while the lady included her husband in her animadversions.

"I knew we should be overcharged the instant I set eyes on the hotel," said the lady. "Didn't I tell you? I was right, you see!"

"Oh, certainly, my dear, you're always right! but whose plan is it to come at all? to give up a com-

fortable house in London, where people are—are—are at least civilized, in order to come here, and—and—and with these poor savages?"

"Good gracious, John!" said the other voice, "you are such an awful fool!"

"Oh, certainly, my dear; but—"

Here a third person interfered, in a low tone, which seemed the soft and more sensible voice of a young girl. She whispered something to the male speaker.

"Who cares if they do!" replied the last.

"What is that you say, Mary?" said the lady.

"I say, perhaps our fellow-passengers may understand English," said the young girl, in an under tone.

"Yes, indeed! but your father's such a fool; he will go on making a ninny of himself."

"Oh, certainly, my dear! I'm always in the wrong; but whose idea was it to bring the carriage and knock it to pieces before even it was got ashore? I told you it would be broken!"

"Pray, madame, do you speak French?" said "number one," addressing, in that language, his silent companion "number two."

"Oui, monsieur."

"We are fortunate in having such pleasant weather for our journey."

"Very."

"Would not you prefer the seat I occupy?"

"Oh non, monsieur."

"Do you go on to Berlin?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you reside there?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am so much a stranger on this part of the Continent, madame, that, if my conversation and questions will not be disagreeable, I shall occasionally beg some information as to the objects on our route."

"It would give me pleasure to afford you any in my power," said the lady.

There was a pause. "Number one" was pleased with his companion, although he could not see her. From her voice and manner of speaking during this short colloquy in the dark, he concluded that she was a lady of good breeding, and that he was favoured with an agreeable companion.

"I think you said you were a resident of Berlin?" at length resumed the young man.

"I did."

"Have you ever been in England?"

"I have."

"You speak English?"

"A little."

"I shall beg, then," said he, "to express myself in that language."

"Alas!" said the lady, in perfect English, only rendered more graceful by a slight foreign accent, "I scarcely know whether I can use, with sufficient facility, a language which I have not practised habitually for so many years."

"Really, madame!" said her companion, "I could mistake you for a countrywoman."

"No, sir," said the lady; "I am an Austrian."

"But you have lived in England?"

"Some time."

"Is it long since?"

"Twenty years."

"Did you like it?"

"In some respects."

"And do you never mean to return there?"

"Oh never!"

The last exclamation was uttered with a vehemence which apparently the speaker herself did not intend, and, perhaps, was not conscious of. It implied a history, and at once piqued the curiosity and awakened the interest of her companion.

"What kind of a place is Berlin, madame?" inquired the young man, after another pause, "and how is a stranger likely to amuse himself there?"

"It is rather difficult to answer your question in a satisfactory manner, unless one knows who puts it."

"If my name will throw any light upon the affair," said the first, good-humouredly, "I am called Mr. Claude Wyndham."

"You mistake me," said the lady, hastily. "I did not mean to be guilty of such a rude question. I intended to say that, before I answered the query, I should know whether he who puts it is in search of knowledge or pleasure."

"For me," said the young man, now also in a more serious tone, "I am travelling without any fixed purpose, to see the world, and to fill up an interval of leisure. I should like to perfect myself in the German language, of which I have already some knowledge. I have been also looking towards the army."

"What army?"

"That of France, madame. That great nation has awakened my deepest sympathy. The stand she has taken commands admiration; and I wish to join the ranks of a people for the first time demanding their rights."

"I have no pretensions to offer you counsel," said the lady; "but if I had, I should warn you against such a course. The revolution which has broken out in France gives indications of an alarming kind; and I fear, whatever necessity there may be for reform, affairs may be hurried on with a precipitateness dangerous to the peace of Europe. But we wander from your question."

"Yes, madame. And do you think I shall like the metropolis of the great Frederic?"

"Unquestionably."

"Is the society agreeable?"

"Quite so."

"May I ask," continued Mr. Wyndham, "whether you are sufficiently acquainted there to give me

information respecting the person to whom I bring a letter. Do you know Count Carolan?"

"Count Carolan? Do you bring a letter to him?"

"I do."

"Well, chance has brought us together in a singular manner," said the lady. "I am a member of Count Carolan's family."

"Then give me leave sincerely to hope," said Mr. Wyndham, "that an acquaintance so pleasantly commenced may be continued."

This discovery seemed to place Mr. Wyndham and his complaisant friend on a new footing. They had already been prepossessed in each other's favour; and, now that the lady discovered her unknown companion to be on the eve of appearing in the Berlin circles under the auspices of Count Carolan, one of the leading members of the *haute société*; and now, too, that Mr. Wyndham learned that his fellow-passenger was a member of Count Carolan's family, the doubts which exist between travellers, however mutually agreeable when not acquainted with each other's standing and character, were entirely dispelled. There remained yet to be satisfied, however, some curiosity on either side. Who was Mr. Wyndham? and why the sadness with which he had alluded to himself? Mr. Wyndham, on the other hand, wondered what relation existed between his companion and the Carolans, and whether he was addressing a wife, a sister, or a poor relative. She had the ease of manner and elegance of conversation which familiar acquaintance with society confers, and there was something about her which arrested his attention. While these reflections passed through their minds, the coach stopped to change horses.

VOL. I.—B

CHAPTER II.

THE change of horses occupied but little time; and, after a few fanciful flourishes on the horn, the heavy vehicle dashed on again at a rapid pace through the shadows of night.

"Have you been long from Berlin, madame?" resumed Mr. Wyndham, when they found themselves once more *en route*.

"But a few weeks, to visit a friend at Hamburg."

"You can tell me, then, whether the Carolans are in town?"

"They are."

"Have I the honour of addressing a relative of Count Carolan?" asked Claude.

"Oh no. I am the *gouvernante* of the young Countess Ida—their only child."

"You have been long a resident in Count Carolan's family?"

"About twelve years; ever since my young pupil required my services."

"The Carolans are agreeable people, I think I have heard."

"I consider myself fortunate in residing with such amiable persons, and particularly in having a pupil so charming."

"The young countess is pretty, then?"

"I meant to apply the term less to her personal appearance than to her mind and heart. But she is extremely beautiful."

"And her age?"

"Eighteen; but it is her character which renders her particularly interesting to me."

"Desist, madame, for Heaven's sake!" cried Wyndham, jestingly, "unless you mean to make me wretched for life. Do you know you are talking to one who disbelieves in the existence of beings

so dangerous? I have numbered them among unicorns, mermaids, and the fabulous images of poetry. Should I encounter such a thing in real life, what would become of me?"

"Indeed, if you are going to spend much time in Berlin, Mr. Wyndham," said Madame Wharton, "I have been rash in colouring the portrait of my young friend so highly; but, before it is too late, allow me to repair my error."

"As far as possible," interrupted Wyndham, smiling.

"Smile if you please," continued Madame Wharton; "but, before you meet her and enter the hospitable house of Count Carolan, it is proper you should learn a fact which I beg to make you acquainted with."

"Ah! don't tell me—that this formidable Helen is already married."

"No."

"I breathe again!" said Wyndham.

"Suspend your breath, then!" said Madame Wharton; "for, although not actually married, she is *fiancée*; and I think one of your English proverbs runs, 'forewarned, forearmed!'"

"Alas, then! I am positively not to fall in love?"

"Positively."

"And there is no hope that a nameless pilgrim may prove more acceptable than *son futur*?"

"No, indeed!"

"For another of our English proverbs is, 'faint heart never won fair lady!'"

"If the lady had anything to do with it; but here the matter is made up between the friends of the parties. The Count Carolan is a gentleman of much intelligence and merit, but he carries pride to *hauteur*; and he is so aspiring, as well as the Countess Carolan, that they would both rather see their daughter dead than united to a man not of high rank and fortune. I fear '*nameless pilgrims*' would stand a very poor chance with them."

"The happy gentleman, then, who has won her, is himself in a high sphere?"

"He is Lord Elkington, son of the Earl of Beverly. His father is infirm, and it is generally thought he will soon receive the title and estates himself."

"Is the young countess at Berlin?"

"Oh yes."

"And the fortunate adorer?"

"Of course."

"And what kind of a person is this fortunate Lord Elkington?"

"Lord Elkington is about two-and-twenty; a fashionable, elegant young man, of distinguished manners, and very fond of Ida. He will be able to support her in a sphere of life even grander than that to which she has been accustomed."

"Ah! grander, my dear madame—as if grandeur were happiness! I am sure I wish the young lady all possible good, but—" He paused. Madame W. made no answer; and a slight yawn, partly suppressed, broke from the lips of Wyndham, announcing that fatigue and drowsiness were becoming too strong for even the attractions of the fair young countess. A little shocked at such a breach of decorum, he was about to make an apology, when, by that mysterious contagion which, it is to be hoped, will be one day better accounted for, his companion followed his example. And a sudden short snore, not unlike the snap of a very hungry dog at a piece of meat, proceeding apparently from the person of "John"—who, with his wife and daughter, had, during the preceding confabulation, preserved a profound silence—indicated that it was late, and that the hour of sleep had arrived. The horses were here changed again. Claude wrapped himself well up in his cloak. Madame Wharton retreated yet farther into her muff and shawl; and, ere long, both fell into a slumber, which people who have never

slept out of bed think only enjoyable in that luxurious article of furniture, but which, notwithstanding, may be both sound and sweet upon the broad and soft cushions of a German *Schnellpost*.

CHAPTER III.

Hour after hour of the night rolled on, and found our new acquaintances nodding and bobbing to each other in the dark, not greatly disturbed by the frequent change of horses, the sounding horn, and the various other noises which one might suppose sufficient to drive "tired nature's sweet restorer" from any eyelids. Sometimes, on being awakened by the crack of the postillion's whip, or the sudden stopping of the coach, Madame Wharton would fall into a train of reflection of which her young fellow-traveller formed the subject. She had not yet fairly seen him, and her curiosity was stimulated by such a conversation with one of whose personal appearance she had so vague an idea. For she remembered nothing more of him than that he had put on a very comfortable-looking nightcap. She liked him more and more every instant. There was a frankness about him which, while it bestowed, also at once elicited confidence. She had been in the habit for years of seeing many young men in the circles in which the Carolans lived. She had never dreamed of exchanging confidence with any of them, and here she had been betrayed into allusion to topics of a private nature by a feeling of congeniality with one whom, in fact, she had never even seen. There was something pleasing, and even commanding, in his air and voice, which struck her as uncommon.

Claude also sometimes, refreshed by a sound nap, would turn himself into a new position, and suffer his mind to run on in advance to the Prussian metropolis; to the scenes hallowed by the eccentricities and genius of the great Frederic, then recently deceased, and to the gay saloons where, ere long, he was to behold the young person whom a lady of such intelligence had pronounced so superior in character and so lovely in person. Like many a sanguine young man of his age, his heart acknowledged a great interest in female beauty, and the sportive warnings of Madame Wharton had not been without effect, although different from that intended.

At length the darkness of night began to grow less black, and the stars, by their "ineffectual fires," showed the matin to be near. The endless plains which form the principal scenery between Hamburg and Berlin became more visible. A gray light fell coldly in through the carriage windows, promising to reveal a more satisfactory view of each other than Madame Wharton and Claude had yet been able to obtain. In the houses of the black, dilapidated stone villages through which the vehicle was whirled with the noise of thunder, lights appeared, and sometimes sleepy heads obtruded themselves, cased in nightcaps, from the windows. Then the early peasants were seen on the road, going cheerfully to their toil, till at length the dusky shadows were fairly put to flight from the sombre earth and now brightening heavens; shafts of fire shot up from the east through the clouds, which, aroused by these heralds, seemed to awake and bestir themselves at the appearance of the sun. The cold night-mists rose from their resting-places in the wide heaths and dark hollows, uncurtaining the silent and almost desert plains, which, monotonous as they were, had, in the eyes of Claude, a certain inexpressible beauty, stretching off into azure distance like the

ocean. At length, reddening and brightening as he advanced, the sun rose above the sombre circle which had so long hailed his coming, and shed a rosy radiance over the scene.

While Claude watched the magnificent changes going on over the heaven and earth, and lifted his soul in humble adoration of Him before whose brightness the sun himself is dim, the other occupants of the diligence remained locked in profound slumber.

Madame Wharton's veil had fallen aside and revealed her features. She was a fine-looking woman of about two or three-and-forty. Her countenance was regular and handsome. Her dress was that of one belonging to the higher classes of society, although modest and unpretending. Besides Claude and herself, there were three other persons in the diligence. The gentleman was a red-faced little man with large black whiskers. His countenance, heavy in sleep, had fallen into an expression of grotesque inanity. The wife was a lady of goodly proportions, who looked as if she had passed her life in breaking "John" into the traces. Upon turning his eyes to the third person (although we do not vouch for the fact that she was the last object of his examination), Claude beheld a really very pretty girl, extremely well dressed, round and graceful in her form, her countenance feminine, soft, and even lovely, and her whole air, though fast asleep, so much superior to what our young traveller had anticipated, that he somewhat hastily took off his cotton nightcap, brushed back his hair, arranged it around his forehead, and made as many other reformations in his toilet as time and space permitted.

"I am sure," thought he, as he indulged himself with another gaze at this innocent face, on which sleep, if it rendered it less charming, seemed to bestow a peculiar grace of its own, "I'm sure this wonderful young countess is not half so pretty."

The coach soon drew up at a dirty-looking inn, out of which a dirty-looking man, with a long dirty pipe, stepped to open the carriage door, as the conducteur, in his usual bad French, put his head in to awaken his charge with,

“Allons, messieurs, voulez-vous déjeuner ici un peu ?”

On meeting at breakfast-table, for which a period of twenty minutes was allowed, the party were drawn more familiarly together, particularly after a cup of excellent coffee had driven away all traces of fatigue and sleep. The renewal of an acquaintance, which had been so auspiciously commenced in the dark, was, by day, all that either of the parties could wish, and, to say the truth, more than they expected. Sober daylight dispels so many agreeable visions which fancy raises in the shadow, that both our lively fellow-travellers were relieved by the result of, at length, a fair view of each other. Madame Wharton appeared advantageously in a room; her figure was tall and dignified, her face by far handsomer than Claude had hitherto thought it, and her manners full of elegance and ease. He could not but again secretly congratulate himself upon the acquisition of such a valuable companion. Nor was Madame Wharton less pleased with his appearance. His figure was taller than she had supposed, and, when he threw off his old travelling cloak, it appeared easy and noble. His countenance was extremely prepossessing even in repose, and, when he spoke, lighted up with mind and soul; and his manners had that indefinite charm which sometimes attaches us to a stranger with a feeling of admiration and even friendship.

The rest of the party were presently found to be a Mr. and a Mrs. Digby, with their daughter. The first two were pleased to address some friendly remarks to Madame Wharton and Claude, for whom they appeared to entertain a profound respect, while

the latter could not avoid proffering to Miss Digby those attentions which youth loves to bestow, and which it seems but natural for beauty to receive. She was a pretty girl, with a very fair complexion, cheeks tinged with a hue which princesses might envy, and which, when she spoke or was spoken to, heightened into a blush. The reader might also like to know that her eyes, when opened, turned out to be of the softest blue. It hardly seemed possible that so fair and delicate a girl could be the daughter of the two ordinary-looking people who accompanied her.

Our travellers were soon interrupted in their breakfast and their observations of each other by the imperative cry of the conducteur, "*Allons, messieurs, en route !*" and in a few moments they found themselves once more in the coach, much refreshed by the breakfast and the pause in their journey.

When they were reseated the conversation was commenced by Mrs. Digby, who addressed herself to Madame Wharton.

"Have you ever been in London, mem? It is a very different place from any of those towns that one sees on the Continent."

"Why, you haven't seen any towns to enable you —to—to—a — a — any comparison between them and London," said Mr. Digby.

Mrs. Digby pressed her lips a little more closely together, and, after a quiet look of compassion upon her better-half, said,

"I'm told Berlin is a beautiful town. Pray, mem, what hotel do you advise us to put up at?"

"Why, although I reside in Berlin," replied Madame Wharton, "I know less of the hotels than a stranger. 'The King of Prussia' is at least in a good part of the town."

"Thank you, mem. That is the very one which our guide-book mentions; but as the guide-book mentions also, in very strong terms of praise, the

'Golden Swan' at Hamburg, which we were at; and as we found that one of the most abominable places—a perfect den of thieves—and without so much as a carpet on the floor, and such a nauseous, filthy place, we didn't know how far the book might be trusted. What do you think of the German beds, mem?"

"I sleep in them very comfortably."

"Well, mem, I can't say I've been half so lucky. Do you know, mem, I would not believe the *garçong* when he told me it was a bed, although I have seen the world, *un poo*, top. I thought it was a *settee*. I did, upon my honour, mem, and so, indeed, I found it, for I was in a sitting posture the whole night long. I could not lie down at all, and, besides that, I had a very handsome feather bed on top of me. The *fem-di-chambre* insisted on it. Ah, mem, if you want to see beds, you should come to England. If you want to see comfort at all, you must come there; cleanliness—doors to the houses—civil servants, coal fires, and Brussels carpets—England for ever, mem."

"Well, there, for a wonder," said Mr. D., "you are right, my dear. Why, I have neither—a—a—a-eaten—nor—a—a slept since I—I—from London. I never saw such a set of—of—of fools as we've met with; and as for carpets, I don't believe they know what they are."

"That's true enough, John," said Mrs. D.

"Why, how should they?" resumed Mr. Digby, "where, in half the inns, all the pigs and old hens in the town are—are—are—all the time—eh—eh—through the hall and kitchen."

"You should not be quite so severe upon us poor Continentals," said Madame Wharton, smiling, "because your hotel in Hamburg was not a good one; and as for carpets, you must not forget that the very ones which you boast of so much in England are made in Brussels!"

"Brussels, mem?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, Brussels carpets! ah, that's a place, then. Is it, indeed?"

Madame Wharton looked rather surprised at this unsophisticated observation.

"Pray, mem, have you ever seen those relics of Frederic the Great, about which so much is said in the guide-book?"

"Yes; they are very interesting."

"They must be, mem."

"I am truly sorry," said Claude, "to have lost the opportunity of being presented to that great man. His genius will endear him to posterity, and the metropolis, which he so much aggrandized, will long be hallowed by associations of him. It will be many centuries before the world will see another sovereign so good."

"I am not so sure of that," said Madame Wharton. "His striking character unquestionably commands, and will long continue to command, attention, but I do not know that the true attributes of a sovereign are not of a yet higher and calmer order. Truth is not always conspicuous, nor wisdom dazzling. A sovereign should not so much seek to distinguish himself, as to protect his people. I believe the nation would be happier under a monarch more conscious of the blessings of peace, and the tranquil, but lasting benefits of justice and moderation."

"Frederic the Great built Berlin himself, I'm told, on poles, mem."

"On Poles!" said Madame Wharton.

"On poles!" echoed Claude.

"Perhaps you mean, figuratively speaking, on the inhabitants of Poland!" suggested Madame Wharton.

"Not in the least, I assure you, mem. I mean on regular *poles of wood*."

"I never heard that before," said Claude, amused by the oddities of the honest dame.

"Didn't you, sir? Why, Lord! it's mentioned in our guide-book positively—built Berlin on *Poles*!—within a large wall—and then ordered the people to go and live there. They talk a great deal about this Frederic the Great; but I must say, that if he ordered his subjects to do any such thing, he must have been a very curious sort of a king, and they must have been very obedient people. Why, do you think, mem, that *I* would be ordered about in that way by our old king, God bless him, or any one else? No, no. If he should command anything of that kind to us Londoners, I can just tell you, and him too, that if he did not have St. James about his ears pretty quick, it would not be our fault."

"I think," said Digby, "you have made some mistake; I don't see how a city could be—eh—eh—on *poles*, I'm sure."

"No mistake at all, I tell you, isn't it in the book? on black and white, as plain as a pipe stem? and I aint such a fool, I take it, but that I can read."

"Well, *I* think you've made a mistake," said Digby, boldly.

"John, how *can* you be such a fool?"

"Well, just refer to the book, and see who's the fool then."

"You do injustice to our great Frederic," said Madame Wharton. "I believe some attempt has been made to raise a building on some *piles*, in a certain part of the town, where the ground is marshy; but the order of the king was only that a certain space of ground should be enclosed within *walls* for the future city."

"There," said Mr. Digby, triumphantly, "who's the fool *now*, my dear?"

"Ah, maybe so, mem!" said Mrs. Digby, rather tartly. "I was never there myself; I only know what I see printed, and our guide-book is called one of the very best, mem!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE conversation of a stagecoach is apt to run on at length into a more confidential character than would be the case under other circumstances. Our travellers beguiled their time agreeably enough till the hour of dinner. The loquacity of Mrs. Digby, which might have been tiresome, if not offensive elsewhere, was here an efficient protection against *ennui*, and a prolific source of amusement. Claude found in these two people an ignorance of things most generally known, which surprised as much as it amused him. It was on the part, at least, of the lady, accompanied with the boldness which is so often its companion. It is only the intelligent who learn to doubt, and have the modesty to avoid coming to conclusions except on good grounds. Mr. Digby continued throughout the day dull and stupid, and Mary silent and blushing. Claude's good-natured endeavours to draw her into conversation elicited nothing more than a change of colour and monosyllabic replies, till at length he gave up the undertaking as impossible. Mrs. Digby, on the contrary, rattled on in edifying carelessness, stumbling every ten minutes into an outrageous error, which, even when by chance she discovered it, did not embarrass her or make her more cautious for the future. She seemed indifferent to every consideration but that of a grand plan of pushing herself into a circle of society abroad, higher than she had been able to get into at home. Both Madame Wharton and Claude were puzzled to comprehend how so much wealth, and the relationship, to which she several times alluded, to the lately deceased Lord Clew, could be reconciled with so little education, and such a singular ignorance of the forms of

even third-rate polite life. It was impossible to avoid being entertained by their mistakes. Traveling through a country, with the language and customs of which they were totally unacquainted, and full of the prejudices which many English, even of a superior condition, bring with them abroad, they were always in trouble. Mr. Digby, who had scraped together a few words of French, found it impossible, as he said, to make those fools understand him; and, at every new object which met their eye, and of which they did not understand the use, they were clamorous in their expression of their surprise or indignation. On many occasions Claude obligingly acted as their interpreter, the more readily as the modest Mary looked her gratitude in a very obvious manner, although she had not yet found courage to put it in words. On stopping for dinner, towards the close of that meal Digby begged Claude to call for some beer, and the attention of the strangers in the room was attracted by his exclamation of, "Ho la, what the devil's the fool at now?" called forth by the appearance of the Prussian beerglass, which, without being greater in circumference than a common tumbler, is about two feet in height, for the purpose of affording room for the superabundant foam of that pleasant beverage. On tasting the beer, which is of the lightest kind, more resembling ginger-pop than the solid drinks which pass by the same name in London, he spit it out with disgust, protesting that the idiots had given him poison. He then insisted upon Claude's calling for some "strong ale." The waiter shook his head in profound ignorance, though not without a broad grin, and Digby swore he was more than ever convinced that the "people of the Continent were only half civilized." In the midst of his expressions of disappointment, the inevitable "*Allons, messieurs, en route!*" called them to resume their journey before he had half finished his dinner. Although he

had eaten less, yet, owing to his hurry and ignorance of the money of the country, he was obliged to pay more than any of his fellow-passengers, and he kept the diligence waiting till the conducteur addressed him with a loud protestation and an inflamed countenance. Reseated in the carriage, he commenced a tirade against Germany and the Germans, their towns, inns, beds, manners, and customs, among which their beer was not forgotten. Mrs. Digby, at length, after telling John to hold his tongue, and that he was an "awful fool," appropriated Madame Wharton to herself, and talked down that lady's few polite efforts to keep up a conversation with an untiring energy, which might have been annoying, had not the good dame's loquacity been seasoned with so much food for mirth. It was not long before, warmed by exertion, she began to give an account of her past life and future plans, which let her auditors a little into the mystery which had so perplexed them.

"I assure you, mem," she continued, "our history is very interesting, and, for want of better amusement in a stagecoach, I'll tell it you. You see, mem, Mr. D., though no one would think so to look at him, poor man—"

"Thank you, my dear," said Mr. Digby.

"You see, mem, Mr. D., as I have, I believe, told you before, is a relation of the late Lord Clew. I suppose you have heard of Lord Clew, mem?"

"No, I do not think I remember him."

"Well, mem, by that means, a few years ago, we came into possession of about £100,000."

"A pretty affair!" said Claude.

"Wasn't it, sir! I assure you, however, as far as *want* goes, I never did; for we were in an excellent business—which is neither here nor there, mem. We didn't even know that Mr. D. was related to my Lord Clew, any more than the child unborn; when, one day, as we were sitting down to dinner—

I remember it as if it had been yesterday; don't you, John?"

"To be sure I do!"

"A good dinner of mutton and turnips, with mint sauce."

"And a hearty tankard of foaming ale," interrupted Digby.

"Rap, rap, rap, rap, goes the knocker," said Mrs. Digby. "A little old gentleman was let in and taken into the back parlour, wanting to see Mr. D. He was a gray-haired, hard-looking old gentleman, of about three or four-and-fifty or so—says he, 'I want to see Mr. Digby—Mr. John Digby!' 'That's your man,' says I. Now anybody else might have been afraid that he was a sheriff's officer, or something of that sort, but not so I; for, as I told you, we were in good circumstances, and I didn't care the tip of my finger for any sheriff's officer of them all. 'I want to see Mr. John Digby,' says he. 'That's your man,' says I. 'My name is Abraham Hand,' says he. 'Is it, sir?' says I. 'Then maybe you'll take a seat?' says I. 'Mr. Digby's father's name was Samuel?' says he. 'It was so,' says I. 'And he came from Birmingham?' says he. 'That's as true as if you'd read it out of a book,' says I. 'And you, I take it, are Mrs. Digby,' says he. 'At your service,' says I. 'Well—'"

"And this was Lord Clew?" said Madame Wharton, when her companion paused a moment to take breath.

"I beg your pardon, mem," continued Mrs. Digby, with some dignity. "I beg your pardon; it was *not* my Lord Clew, by no manner of means—for he was dead and buried, poor man—but it was one of the most curious characters in the known world. It was a person who, although no lawyer, has spent his life in courts of justice and such places, and who keeps one eye on all the great families in the kingdom, and the other on all the wills—"

and other registers of property. He knows the state of everybody's fortune, they say, better than they do themselves ; and where it came from, and where it is to go, particularly everything that has been tergiversated in courts of justice—or chancery I think they call it, mem."

"This is singular," said Madame Wharton.

"I think I have heard of some such person," said Claude.

"Very probably, sir. Now you'll observe, mem, in such a stupendious place as London, there are some people who don't know their own rights, or who they really are ; and I'm told this individual not only often has the pleasure of being the first to inform people that they have fallen heirs to large estates, but that, in the course of his explorations amid old wills and other parchments, he frequently lights upon property bequeathed or reverted to people who neither court, nor jury, nor chancellor, nor anybody else knows the least thing about, and whether they are alive or dead, or in the country or in foreign parts, mem."

"This is really remarkable," said Madame Wharton.

"Isn't it, mem ? It turned out that Mr. Digby, poor creature, was a distant relation of Lord Clew's, without any one's knowing anything about it. My lord himself knew there was such a relation living, but had never taken the pains to ferret him out, and died suddenly without a will. I'm afraid I don't give a very clear account of it, but it all fell out right, and we left it entirely to our solicitor, who soon found matters to be just as Mr. Hand had said. Mr. D. gave Mr. Hand £1000 like a great fool, when, as I told him at the time, £100 would have done just as well ; but we received our £100,000, and a very agreeable thing it was, I can assure you, mem."

"Your story is like one of the Arabian Nights," said Claude.

"Night or day, sir, so it was ; and we were much obliged to Mr. Hand, who has been a great friend to us ever since, and is, in fact, even now a sort of agent of ours ; for he knows more about law and such things, I believe, than all the lawyers put together. Now, mem, my passion is society. Mr. D. isn't fond of it, but I am never easy unless I'm in the *bong-tong*. This is one of my objects in coming to Berlin ; and, if you can make us acquainted with a few genteel families—the Carolans, and such kind of persons—in case of your coming to London, I'll promise to return the compliment. I have been told that we should enjoy more facilities in the society abroad than at home. I don't know how it is, but the London society is very difficult. They're a proud set, and go in clusters like swarms of bees. We never could git acquainted with our own countrymen, even when they lived next door to us. We have brot letters to Mounseer Godeau—you know them, doubtless. They are very high people in Berlin, I'm told, mem, and will introduce us also everywhere into the *ho-tong*. Pray, how do they stand there, mem ?"

This long harangue being at length brought to a conclusion, she paused a moment, partly for breath, and partly for an answer to one of the various questions contained in it ; but, by a slight sound from Madame Wharton, she perceived that that lady had fallen asleep.

The second night in a diligence is generally more easily got through with than the first. Fatigue of body and mind produces an inevitable disposition to sleep, and one becomes so accustomed to the usual incidents and interruptions that they no longer form any obstacle to repose. At length Mrs. Digby's everlasting tongue stopped, and all sank to sleep. The night rolled away, and the travellers

were whirled rapidly on, doubtless edified by their respective dreams. Those of Mrs. Digby were of sweeping trains, nodding feathers, and long robes of satin and velvet, with a magnificent young lord at the feet of the ever-blushing Mary. The fancy of Mr. Digby reverted back to less prosperous, but, alas! more happy days, before fortune had elevated him to the troublesome necessity of being "genteel." Claude, so much had they talked of the celebrated town they were approaching, glided in imagination through its streets, with temples, columns, and domes everywhere around him; while Madame Wharton herself was once more young and lovely—the admired and observed of all—treading through scenes which Time, that ruthless and ever-busy robber, had long borne with him into his own dark realm of the past. What had recalled to her those long-forgotten times? What had awakened in her imagination the images of a reality which she had ever wished to turn away from, or to regard as empty dreams? By some strange and subtle association, the phantoms of vanished years had started up once more around her, and encircled her with the happy and long-faded hours of youth, and hope, and joy.

At length the morning broke, and the idea of being so near their journey's end aroused the sleepers at an early hour. Claude turned his eyes towards the dim, indistinct scenes flying past the carriage window, and, letting down the glass, admitted the cool, refreshing air. He began already to experience that pleasing sensation with which one enters, for the first time, a great foreign city. His mind was stored with historical associations of the great men who had lived and who still live there. The approach to the capital, after his long travel over the desert and apparently endless plains in which northern Germany inclines towards the Baltic, seemed like nearing land after a sea-voyage. Traces of a neighbouring population began already to

manifest themselves. Better houses, more cultivated gardens, thicker and more regular avenues of trees, higher walls, and various other tokens, not only of the proximity of a large town, but of royalty itself. As the *Schnellpost* entered the little village of Charlottenburg, these indications grew more numerous and striking, till the chateau and its beautiful grounds broke upon his eyes, looking in that early light like a scene of enchantment.

"This is very pretty and striking!" said Claude. "The chateau is, of course, a royal residence?"

"It was built by his late majesty," said Madame Wharton.

"What late majesty, mem?" demanded Mr. Digby.

"Frederic the Great!"

"Dear me, how new it looks," said Mrs. Digby.

"New?"

"Certainly, mem. I did not know that any houses built by Frederic the Great could yet have as new an appearance as that."

"And why not?"

"Why, I thought he lived a long time ago—in the time of Brutus, and those fellows!"

The carriage now entered the *Thiergarten*, or Berlin's Park, a beautiful and thick wood about three miles in circumference, lying immediately outside the city walls and the principal gate. The pretty river *Spree*, a branch of the majestic Elbe, after meandering through the city, comes bending into the *Thiergarten*, bearing its cool breezes in summer into the sylvan recesses of the wood, and then stealing in to bathe the terraces of the Charlottenburg chateau. From this river, by the taste and care of royalty, streams are led in many devious ways through the grounds, winding by and beneath what the stranger thinks the prettiest banks and bridges he ever saw. Carriage roads, lanes for equestrians, and footpaths lead the eye and tempt

the feet in a thousand different directions ; while the great road, as straight as an arrow, runs directly through the forest to the Brandenburg gate, one of the chief architectural ornaments of the city, and, perhaps, the most magnificent portal in Europe.

Our travellers at length approached the walls, and caught the scenic view through the tall columns of this gate. The rising sun sent its beams through the forest arcades (which, even at this season, from the brightness and clearness of the day and the number of evergreen trees, preserved something of the effects of summer), and tipped with gold the colossal bronze figure of Victory and her four horses on the top, which has since witnessed such remarkable changes, and even acted its part in the vicissitudes of this interesting country. The city population were now fairly forth in moving crowds. Peasants, labourers, milkwomen with their little dog-carts, soldiers, officers, sentinels, and droskies appeared on every side. Suddenly a band of martial music burst upon them, and a large company of infantry were marched out of the gate ; while a troop of cavalry, their helmets, swords, and cuirassiers glittering in the sun, dashed rapidly off in another direction. This great military government, ever destined to support a brilliant army, was now animated by the prospect of a war with France ; a war whose interminable duration and eventful consequences, how few of all then living could foresee ! The carriage, in passing the gate, entered a large square, through which double rows of trees seemed to continue the wood into the bosom of the town.

While the custom-house officers were examining the passports, Madame Wharton informed them that the street they were entering was called the " Linden," and pointed out the residences of several distinguished people. They had time, however, for few observations. The diligence almost immediately dashed on once more, and, after a considera-

ble ride through the town—which, from the hasty views caught of it, the vistas of long streets, and glimpses of churches, statues, bridges, and columns, seemed a city of palaces and temples—they reached the *poste*.

It was Claude's intention to attend Madame Wharton home in a public coach; but, as he was about making the offer, she saw Count Carolan's carriage waiting for her, and a *chasseur*, in rich livery, advanced to take charge of her. They therefore bade each other adieu, and with a warmth which showed to both the mutual sentiments of esteem and friendship which had arisen between them.

"Remember," said Madame Wharton, "you have already half chosen me for your Mentor; and really, in the scenes through which you are about to pass, you may find such a companion, although sometimes troublesome perhaps, not altogether useless."

Claude promised to take the earliest occasion to see her; and then, at their earnest request, accompanied the Digbys to the *Hôtel du Roi de Prusse*.

CHAPTER V.

FEW pleasures are more agreeable than the first arrival in a foreign city in good health and bright weather; the change of toilet, the leisurely breakfast at a comfortable hotel, after the hurry and fatigue of a journey; and "last, but not least," the ramble through the town, amid things strange, fantastic, and hallowed by historical associations.

After an excellent breakfast and a change of toilet, which much improved the appearance of our young traveller, he prepared to sally forth and see

the town. As he intended a considerable stay in Berlin, he required a servant; and, ignorant of its localities, he concluded to procure one, if possible, at once. Accordingly, he made inquiries of the waiters, and was informed that there was then in the house a valuable domestic, just by chance out of place, and who would immediately present himself. Claude decided to employ him for the day, and, if he liked him, to keep him. A modest knock at the door presently announced a young man of agreeable countenance and altogether prepossessing appearance. He was well furnished with recommendations from a host of counts, barons, and ambassadors, with whom he had lived different periods of time, and who pronounced him everything that was honest, zealous, active, and faithful. His manners were engaging, and even what Mrs. Digby would have called "genteel." He was obviously modest and intelligent, and Claude liked him at a glance.

"You are a Berlinian?"

"Yes, your excellency!"

"Do you understand English?"

"No, your excellency!"

"You are, of course, well acquainted with the town?"

"Perfectly, your excellency!"

"I will employ you to-day," said Claude; "leave your certificates. I will look them over, and perhaps I will take you permanently into my service."

"Monseigneur is very good."

"Get ready to go out with me: I wish to walk through the town. If you do not already know the address of Count Carolan, find it. And—don't call me 'excellency,' or 'monseigneur,' but plain *monsieur*."

"Pardon, monsieur—*milles pardons*."

"Your name?"

"Carl, monseign—monsieur."

Claude was pleased with the simplicity of this young man. There was about him an air of artlessness and good-nature which promised well. Accompanied by him, he commenced his first ramble through the town, then peculiarly interesting to strangers from the brilliant and recently-closed career of the great military genius who had rendered the Prussian army formidable to Europe. Claude's first care was to leave his letter of introduction at Carolan's. The count resided in an imposing mansion, which had a palace-like and almost royal appearance. It was covered with sculpture. The large court in front was adorned with vases and statues, of which also a row looked down from the ridges of the roof. An open archway revealed the vista of a garden in the rear, extending back indefinitely, and thickly planted with trees and shrubbery in the English style. Several serving-men in livery were lounging by the broad door. It was at once recognised as the residence of one of those *grands seigneurs* who live in the midst of royal splendour without the grave cares and heavy responsibilities of a throne.

"And so, then," thought Claude, as the *tout-ensemble* of this princely residence rose upon his eye, and he caught through the windows indistinct views of the interior magnificence—angles of large paintings hung against the walls, snowy statues, golden ceilings and shutters, and gorgeous curtains—"this is the home of her whom Madame Wharton describes as so beautiful and superior."

"Where will monsieur go next?" said Carl, who had been standing some time with his hat in his hand, and who had concluded at length to interrupt a revery which did not seem likely to have any particular termination.

"Show me the town," said Claude. "I wish to see only its exterior to-day. Whatever there is most attractive to a stranger."

Carl led the way through streets celebrated for their architectural magnificence, the principal objects of which the guide-books will give more in detail than it would be possible for us to do. Suffice it to say, that he was struck with the magnificence of everything around him. Fountains which threw their sparkling waters high into the air; ample squares; level streets; long lines of sculptured façades, temples, palaces, churches, statues, columns, porticoes, and bridges, in a stately order, which recalled the imperial splendours of old Rome, when Augustus and Vespasian delighted to adorn the capital. Among the rest, the large royal palace or *Schloss*, a vast edifice, imposing from its size and position, lifted its towering walls against the sky. Carl pointed out each edifice and object worthy of remark, and gave the necessary information respecting them with respectful attention. While they were thus employed, several elegant equipages, each drawn by four horses, with outriders and postillions, and all the pomp of royalty, drove by, their occupants receiving the universal salutations of the crowd, and returning them with great affability. Among others, that of the king, the father of the present beneficent sovereign, was announced by a low-toned expression of Carl's, "Monsieur—*sa majesté!*" and a yet more reverential salutation.

"Ah, well!" thought Claude, as everything wore a bright aspect through the atmosphere of an unusually clear day, "I have got here into a very pretty town, and I will not leave it till I have laid out for myself a plan of future conduct. I will no longer sigh over the sad mystery of the past. I will adopt some certain and honourable employment; and, if nothing better presents itself, I will even make my way into France, and aid that rising people in the pursuit of national happiness. In the mean time I am young, in health, my own master, and, at all events, for the present, independent. Let me im-

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prove my time while I can. Why should I suffer one secret misfortune to overbalance all these advantages? He is the true philosopher who enjoys life while he can, and quaffs the foaming drink before the sparkle leaves the brim."

While passing through a street on their way home, they were interrupted by a group of several persons around a print-shop window, where a number of engravings and pretty paintings were the objects of attention.

"Will monsieur pass in?" said Carl. "There are often very pretty things here. All the Berlin *société* visit this shop."

Casting his eyes through the door, he was struck with some soft landscapes, and, stepping across the threshold, he became too much interested to retire without seeing the whole collection. Leaving Carl, therefore, at the door, he entered; and perceiving—by the little attention his appearance occasioned, and the three or four other persons, apparently strangers like himself, also engaged in their examination—that it was a kind of public exhibition, he yielded to the charm which he always found in works of art. Paintings to him were another, a newer world, created by the mind of the artist out of the wide materials of this. There, all is either grand, or soft, or wonderful. The yearnings which the mortal has after something above the rude masses amid which even the fairest things lie half buried, are there unobscured. He who feels art finds an enchanted world in a picture gallery. The homeliest commonplaces there have a beauty not seen before; it unlocks the secret sweetness of things; opens their hidden meaning, draws aside the veil, and makes the narrowest mind behold how beautiful are even the homely ground and rough rocks—the every-day trodden shore—the river that, in our business hours, flows unregarded at our feet—the rain-washed angles of old houses—the sky—the

clouds—the very air. Claude gazed around him with these reflections. Suddenly he found himself by an open door, which led into a smaller apartment or little cabinet, also filled with pieces, apparently of a more valuable kind. At the end of this room, in a conspicuous place, and where the light fell across it with the best effect, was the portrait of a young girl, so beautiful, that he paused before it, and became presently unconscious of everything else. It equalled, and went beyond his idea of complete female loveliness. Nothing could be more simple. A light but modest drapery fell around the form. There was no ornament about it. He could not tell whether it was a princess or a cottage maiden. There was nothing on the canvass but youth, innocence, happiness, and beauty.

His reveries were interrupted by a sigh. On turning, he observed at his side a young man who had before escaped his attention, and who, possibly, also supposed himself alone. He was about the middle height, slenderly formed, with a pale, melancholy face. His hair and brows were black, and he wore a large mustache. There was nothing remarkable in his physiognomy except his eyes, which were dark and large, and uncommonly brilliant. His hat was worn low over them. His clothes were old and faded. He was evidently very poor.

“This is quite pretty!” said Claude, with a desire to relieve the embarrassment which the stranger appeared to feel on perceiving that his sigh had been overheard.

“Yes, monsieur, quite.”

“Can you tell me who it is?”

“No, monsieur.”

“Do you know the artist?”

“Yes, monsieur—no, monsieur.”

“Can it be from nature?” continued Claude.

“No, monsieur,” said the stranger, “I believe it is a fancy piece.”

“ Ah, very probably—and yet—it is a great pity
—for—”

He turned, and with some surprise observed that his companion had disappeared.

Carl, with his usual bow, now approached, and reminded him that the dinner-hour was four, and that it had already arrived. Tired with his long ramble, for there are few kinds of toil more laborious than sight-seeing, the calls of appetite began to counteract the claims of imagination, and he left the pair of tender eyes to be gazed upon by some less hungry admirer. As he approached the hotel, all minor considerations were merged in the more important one of dinner. The fumes of the fragrant dishes already drove less substantial enjoyments from his mind ; and it may be recorded of our hero, without the fear of contradiction (should any curious reader choose to examine the manuscripts deposited in “*la Bibliothèque du Roi*,” from which we have drawn the materials of this history), that, notwithstanding his habit of sentimentalizing before palaces, paintings, &c., which might lower his reputation with our more practical readers, he did nevertheless partake, with as little delay as the ordinary usages of polite life permitted, of a hearty meal, during the whole period of which he was in a state of beatitude as lively as when melting before the art of the cunning painter. It is farther set down, that a half bottle of “*chateau la Rose*,” or some beverage equivalent (for here there is a blot in the manuscript), which the waiter brought full, and placed by his napkin at the commencement of the dinner, was, in the course of an hour, so altered in its condition, that the said waiter, on carrying it to the kitchen and turning the same up-side-down, with the neck slightly resting between his lips, found nothing there sufficient to repay him for his trouble.

CHAPTER VI.

ON the day of Claude's arrival in Berlin there was a ball and supper at Count Carolan's. The company assembled at nine, and the elegant apartments of this distinguished nobleman were crowded with the beauty and fashion of the town.

In this brilliant atmosphere, the important questions of the day were discussed with smiles and jests. The war with France—the revolution—the politics of England, were all alluded to gayly; while, with diplomatic caution, nothing either one way or the other was said about them. Some played cards—some strolled about—crowds pressed to the ballroom, where, conspicuous for her loveliness, the young Countess Ida was led to the first dance by Elkington; while Lady Beverly, a tall, dark-looking woman of considerable beauty, although a little faded, with black and large eyes, and a countenance, through all the smiles of fashion, care-worn and anxious, sat down to whist.

The principal topic of conversation, however, was Ida and Elkington. They were such a striking couple. The match was such an admirable one. Was it settled? When would it take place? and a hundred other questions were asked and answered in various ways.

In the mean time, Elkington exerted all his powers of fascination to render himself agreeable to his lovely companion. This was the evening he had fixed upon to solicit her consent, that of her father and mother having been before obtained, on condition of his being able to procure hers. The young girl was obviously flattered with her influence over a person so distinguished. She listened to his gay and fluent conversation with delight. She heard him breathe sentiments of refinement and honour,

and she knew that he was regarded with favour by her parents. When he leaned towards her, she scarcely turned away; when he held her hand in his, she did not withdraw it. The music floated around her—the glittering images of the dance, and forms of splendour and pleasure passed before her. Ignorant of his heart—ignorant of her own and of the world, she knew not that she was capable of a deeper feeling than the tranquil satisfaction which she experienced at the attentions of her lover, and the pleasure she saw their union would give to her parents.

At length the dance was over, and the young girl, trembling at the tenderness of Elkington's manner, and at a crisis in her life so new and interesting, withdrew from his too ardent flatteries. She passed through half a dozen saloons. Never had she looked so beautiful. There is something in the first approaches of love which sheds a soft and dangerous sweetness over even a homely face. What was the charm which it added to that of Ida! She wished to withdraw from every gaze, and most particularly from that of Elkington. With this intention she hastened through two or three more rooms (now deserted, for the company had crowded into the ballroom) into a little exquisitely furnished boudoir, shaded with vines, and odorous flowers and plants, where a dim light intentionally left all in a shadow peculiarly grateful to the eye after the glitter and glare of the ballroom. By chance she found the boudoir unoccupied, and she entered a recess—half bower, half grotto—at the farther end. Here she sat down alone. The momentary solitude was delicious to her. The darkness soothed her eyes. The silence, coolness, and motionlessness, after the flashing and shifting images of the crowd, sunk into her soul with the breath of the flowers that leaned fragrant and cool around. Her head was bent down upon one hand, the other hung by

her side. She remained lost in thought, which, however, ran in a stream of deep and peaceful joy, for her heart had never known a fear or a care; she sighed, but with happiness. Presently she felt a gentle hand introduced into her own. Starting, she turned and saw Elkington; a *beau chevalier* whom few female hearts as young as hers could resist—
as, alas! many an unhappy maid has proved.

“My charming girl,” said Elkington, “you fly me. I have looked for you everywhere, but—oh, happy moment, I find you here—and never shall you leave this spot till you hear me tell how madly I love you.”

“Oh, my lord, for Heaven’s sake—should any one come”—and she but lightly attempted to withdraw her hand.

“Beautiful Ida, why should you hesitate? what pleasure can a heart so gentle as yours take in keeping in suspense one who adores you?”

“My dear Lord Elkington, I hear a step; leave me, I entreat you, till to-morrow.”

“No, Ida,” said Elkington, in a voice of sadness, which caused her to stop her attempt to release her hand, in order that she might listen; “no, sweet girl, I will hear my doom to-night. Tell me at once whether you will be mine. I must learn from your own lips whether I am happy or miserable. I fear, indeed, from your flying my presence—from your anxiety to withdraw from the hand that would defend you with life—that you despise me—that you—”

“Despise! oh, my lord, how can you use so dreadful a word? Despise! oh no.”

“You are, I am sure, above the coquetry of your sex, and will never trifle with the heart that loves you. Speak to me. You have tried to withdraw your hand. I resign it—I return it to you. If you are ever going to bless me with it, dearest girl, be frank on this transaction, as you are on all others;

do not prolong my suspense—my suffering. Deny it to me for ever, or give it to me now.”

She lifted her eyes; they met his ardent gaze. The earnestness and tenderness of his voice and manner affected her. She raised her hand and placed it in his.

“I am frank, my lord—as I will be true; and if I forget the reserve proper in so young a girl, it is only that—your feelings are—dearer to me than—my own.”

“Ida! beloved angel!” said Elkington.

A crowd of young girls, laughing and talking, and just returning from the dance, were now heard approaching, and they burst noisily in, little dreaming how well-timed had been their coming.

CHAPTER VII.

LADY BEVERLY and her son got into their carriage at an early hour, and Elkington ordered the coachman to drive round the Park. The night was clear without being cold, and the fresh air was pleasant after the heat and somewhat uncommon excitement of the ball.

“Besides,” said Elkington, as they wheeled out of the Brandenburg gate, “I have to inform you of what may lead to a consultation, which had better be enjoyed at a proper distance from keyholes and the thin partitioned rooms of these hotels. I have had *du succès* to-night. The pretty bird is limed.”

“You have had a conversation with Ida?” demanded Lady Beverly, with lively marks of pleasure.

“She has, rather, acknowledged my superior

charms," replied Elkington, also in the highest spirits; "and I do not greatly doubt that, if I pressed the thing, it might take place any day I choose."

"Then, for the love of Heaven, Edward, let it be at once."

"I see no reason to be so alarmingly hasty," said Elkington, "though I am not disposed myself to make any delay. She is a devilish fine girl. I haven't seen her match. You may settle matters as soon as you please with the old people. I give you *carte blanche*."

"I will then see the countess in the morning."

"But will you answer me one question?" asked Elkington.

"*Tant que vous voudrez*," said Lady Beverly.

"I have observed in you a degree of anxiety respecting this *partie* which I can't account for. What does it mean? What particular interest have you in this young lady?"

"Singular question!" said Lady Beverly. "Is it extraordinary that a mother should exhibit anxiety on the subject of her son's settlement in life?"

"No, not any reasonable anxiety; but you seem, by a kind of logic, to betray the greatest anxiety precisely at the moment when I feel the least."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"This, my good madame. When my amiable father, Heaven preserve his life, is in good health, and promises to last out the season, you settle down into indifference. Now it is exactly when my father promises to live long that I feel most desirous of touching a fortune of my own. But, when the old man is in one of his fits, and bids fair to pop suddenly off, you are for marrying me to money in any shape. Now I, not being at heart a marrying man, would rather keep my freedom if I came into possession of my inheritance, which, being entailed on the eldest son, must come to me whether he will or not."

“Your imagination sees things which have no existence in reality,” said Lady Beverly. “My *empressement* to see you settled advantageously is always equal; although, according to my mind, I may not always betray it in the same degree. Only, Edward, I want to see you married.”

“Much obliged to you, madame, I’m sure, for your kind intentions; but, by Heaven, so mawkish do I consider married life, that, if this charming creature were less exquisite than she is, I would bolt even yet. It’s devilish lucky for her that she’s so pretty, or she would stand a slender chance of being the Countess Beverly. A wife? bah! I am a fool even now. The old man is ill; he must—d—n it, he can’t last long. I come in for my £50,000 a year; I pay my debts, and then what shall I do with a wife? I shall be sick as death of her in six months, and she, very likely, will run off from me in twelve. She has too lovely a face to keep out of danger. I shall have to shoot half a dozen fellows on her account, to see her slip through my fingers at last; for women, foul and fair, are all alike at heart; and, though delicious creatures in their proper places, are sad encumbrances when tied to one by law. Partridge, always partridge.”

“I am afraid, it is true, that your disposition will prevent your ever settling down into a happy husband; but I trust it will correct some of your follies. You will have no longer temptation to gamble; at least, except at home, and more moderately. Your debts once paid—”

“Ah, that’s the question. If it were not for them, I could leave this pretty thing to some more sentimental adorer. Marriage sickens me. It’s a damp-er. But Shooter is getting impatient; and then—the Jew; oh! how I hate and dread that man!”

“What are the amounts of these frightful liabilities? You have often promised to tell me when once in the way to discharge them. Your marriage

with Ida will do that at once, and enable you, moreover, to be rich besides. What *are* the debts?"

"Oh, as things stand, I don't mind, if you think your nerves can bear it!"

"I can bear anything, if you will conclude at once your marriage with Ida. Come, frankly tell me the amount."

"Well, frankly, then, I owe Shooter £15,000."

"And the other—the usurer?"

"£25,000."

"Edward, my son!" cried Lady Beverly, equally astonished and terrified.

"That's it," said Elkington, lifting his foot against the chariot cushion, and tapping it lightly with his rattan. "I told you your nerves were not strong enough."

"£25,000?"

"Just, besides interest; which, by the time the old man goes, if he doesn't go pretty quick, will make it £40,000. Old Abraham is no half-way man: he is, I believe, without intending to flatter him, the most intense scoundrel that ever breathed. He's got me hooked in such a way that all earth can't help me; pay I must, and pay I shall."

"Great Heaven! I had no idea of this; and if your father should determine to—to—"

"He can't, madame; and, by Heaven, I don't understand you; you have hinted this to me half a dozen times. I am my father's heir, and neither he nor any one else can help it. He won't last. He's growing worse and worse. And, notwithstanding, as usual, he goes on in the same way—living high, drinking deep; and the doctor says it must be over with him soon. With this prospect before me, what's forty, fifty, a hundred, or even more thousands. It is but living a year or two somewhere abroad, or a lucky turn at cards, and all's right again!"

"Listen to me, Edward," said Lady Beverly, in

a tremulous voice. "But why do I advise you?" She caught herself, as if on the eve of making a disclosure respecting which she had changed her mind. "Go on—play deep, as you have hitherto done—heap yourself with debts—till one day you may remember your mother's caution against the wretched life of a gambler, and the danger of such equivocal characters as Shooter—when, perhaps, it may be too late to profit by it."

"It's false, madame," said Elkington; "the gambler's life, if you honour me with that appellation, is not wretched. That is a cry raised by cowards who have not the courage to play, or by whining asses that have lost. Play is life—happiness. Nothing else gives me pleasure. I even deplore the hours lost in attendance upon this little girl, and which might be so much more delightfully employed. The life of a player who has his wits about him is one of continual pleasure. Its disappointments come unattended with pain; for what you lose to-day is, you know, only lent to be regained to-morrow. Besides, some one must eventually win, and why not I? Where so much money changes hands, it must go somewhere. It doesn't melt!"

"Ah, yes it does—and most effectually!" said Lady Beverly.

"I allow something for your wit, madame, but one may be facetious without being just; and as for Shooter, he's a devilish fine fellow—true as steel—and what's lost to him is fairly lost. As for Abraham—there, I acknowledge, I've been duped; but what's 'without remedy should be without regard.' I'll marry the girl if the fortune is, as you assure me, large, and to be come at readily. This will quiet them all, if it does not immediately pay them. We'll go back to London, and—"

They had now reached their hotel. Scarlet threw open the door. In the hall a gentleman was com-

ing out. Lady Beverly dropped her shawl. The footman was hastening to pick it up, but it fell at the stranger's feet. He raised it, politely handed it to her, and passed on. At this moment Lady Beverly staggered back against the wall, pale, and nearly fainting.

"Madame, you are ill," said Claude—for it was he—hastening to her assistance.

"No, sir—thank you—it is the—air—the ball—Scarlet—Edward—to my room—at once."

Her fine appearance and splendid ball-dress, as well as the *distingué* air of Elkington, and the richness of the livery of the servants, excited Claude's attention. On inquiring, he learned that he had aided Lady Beverly and Lord Elkington. They had the first floor of the hotel at which he had been to make a call. He could scarcely repress a feeling of envy, as the tall, handsome form of Elkington disappeared from his view, and he thought what a happy fate was his.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning, on coming in from a ramble, Claude found Count Carolan's card, with an invitation to dinner the next day. In the mean time he amused himself exploring the town, ranging through the immense and splendid palaces, lounging in the Park, and seeing the various curiosities interesting to travellers.

Returning from a walk later in the morning of the same day on which he received Carolan's first note, he found another from him, begging him to be at home the next morning at twelve, as it would give him pleasure to accompany him in the call usually

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made by a stranger desirous of being introduced into society. Claude knew not whether to ascribe this attention to the representations of Madame Wharton, or to the letter of introduction from Lord Perceval. He felt that the former was cordially his friend; and he knew that the latter, well disposed towards him, had written a warm note, begging his services in favour of a valued friend. Whatever it might be ascribed to, he replied by accepting gratefully a kindness offered with so much courtesy.

He had scarcely replied to it when a second note, in a pretty female hand, was brought in by Carl.

He opened and read :

“MY DEAR MR. WYNDHAM :

“Mamma begs me to write you our address. We have taken furnished rooms at No. 70 ‘*sous les arbres.*’ We are also in some difficulty with a horrid man of whom papa bought some things this morning; and mamma says, if you would call in the course of the day, she should be particularly obliged.

“Yours truly,

“MARY DIGBY.”

It was about three o'clock, and Claude, who, in the pleasure of seeing the town and reflections upon his own prospects and plans, had forgotten his honest fellow-voyagers and the modest Mary, thought he could not better employ the leisure hour before dinner than in paying the desired visit immediately.

Mrs. Digby, in accordance with her plan of making a dash, had taken very elegant apartments; and Claude found the new rooms in the broad and shaded street called “the *Linden*,” or sometimes, also, from the avenues of linden-trees which ornamented its whole length, *sous les arbres*. The house was in the most fashionable part of it and of the town. A servant, in a gaudy livery, waited at the door and admitted him. He could scarcely believe that he

was in the demicil of the Digbys, so much had they, in the diligence, savoured of London low life. He found them in a pretty boudoir, at the end of several large and handsome rooms. They were so well dressed that he could scarcely recognise his old companions of the *schnellpost*. Mrs. Digby had the appearance of a very respectable old lady. Mr. Digby's toilet had also been carefully attended to, and the timid Mary looked lovelier than ever. Claude really admired her modest face, the beautiful contour of her head, her clear and tender complexion, and the Hebe-like proportions of her form. For a moment he thought her almost as pretty as the painting which had so much attracted his attention. From the appearance of the whole party, he saw at once that, with the aid of dress—if the two parents would only hold their tongues a little more, and Mary a little less—they might, with the aid of their wealth, and under the protection of the name of their "relative, the late Lord Clew," pass through the walks of fashion for a month or two as well as others. His coming was warmly welcomed. Digby rose from a person with whom he was sitting at a little table, advanced cordially, and, after slapping him on the back with hearty familiarity, told him he was "devilish glad to see him." Mrs. Digby was loud in her pleasure, and Mary blushed with tenfold grace, and lifted her eyes and cast them down again with a timid embarrassment rather dangerous to a susceptible youth who had never fallen in love with anything more substantial than a picture.

"Well, I am devilish glad to see you, my boy," said Digby.

"Now, John, you just sit down to your lesson," said Mrs. Digby. "We'll take care of Mr. Wyndham. You needn't think you're going to get clear on his account. Only think, sir," continued she, turning to Claude again, "a person connected with the late Lord Clew, and not to know a word of

French. He doesn't even know what *turnips* are. But, by-the-way, Mr. Wyndham, you haven't been introduced. This is our French master; you needn't be afraid of what you say before him; for—he don't understand a single word of English—we talk our secrets before him, poor devil! just as we would before a dumb beast; don't we, old bullfrog?"

The Frenchman, who perceived that he was spoken to without knowing the meaning of the words, made two low bows, and placed his hand on his heart with an expression of grateful civility.

"We have *such* fun," said Mary, for the first time launching into a remark.

"I call him *long pockets*," said Digby. "Don't I, old beeswax?"

"Infinément obligé!" cried the Frenchman, again turning to Digby with a violent bow.

"This is Mr. Wyndham," said Mrs. Digby.

"*Vinder?*" echoed the poor man, not understanding.

"I say," cried Mrs. Digby, raising her voice almost to a scream, and putting her mouth close to his ear, as if she could make him better comprehend by speaking very loud; "I say, this is Mr. Wyndham—Mounseer Wyndham—our intimate friend—came in the diligence with us from Hamburg—because, you know, our travelling carriage was broke by that stupid John" (here she cast a look of indignation on her unhappy husband)—"so *he* came on with us. Do you understand *that?*"

The man cast a look of inquiry upon her features for the sense which her words failed to convey, and then looked in the faces of the rest; but, not succeeding in getting the faintest glimpse of what she had communicated, notwithstanding she went on with greater vehemence to the last word, he shrugged his shoulders, drew up his face into a dismal look of regret and opaqueness, and said,

"Ma foi, madame—comprends pas!"

“ Ah, the poor wretch !” said Mrs. Digby, laughing heartily. “ Let him alone. Did you ever see such born fools as these foreigners are ? And do you, John, go on with your lesson.”

This scene afforded Claude an opportunity of observing the gentleman in question. He was a lank, weather-stained, long Frenchman, thinly clad in garments of a threadbare appearance. His trousers pockets reached nearly to his knees, and were obviously empty, except when his large hands were thrust into them, a peculiarity which had probably drawn upon him the *sobriquet* of “ long pockets” from the humour of his interesting pupil. It is not impossible that he might have worn a shirt, but it is certain that there was no appearance of one, although, from his peculiar style of dress, the eye was easily able to penetrate a considerable way under his stock down his bony throat, and up the sleeves of his wristbands. His features were cast rather in a striking than elegant mould. His mouth was of great width ; his lips so large as to have, perhaps, afforded him the cognomen to which he usually replied. His ears, like his nose, were of ample size, and stood handsomely out from his head ; and his foot and hand were also of dimensions which rivalled each other. He was, in short, a very odd, but not a particularly ugly-looking person ; and, for the irregularities of physiognomy already stated, fortune had favoured him with a good set of teeth ; bright, intelligent eyes ; a head of hair remarkable for its abundance, and the flourishing manner in which, without tongs or pomade, it curled about his head ; and last, but not least, with a stock of self-approbation never exhausted and not exhaustible, flowing through all his veins, lurking in every angle and shade of his face, and creating—happy mortal!—in his interior bosom an everlasting sunshine.

“ Well ! the poor devil can’t understand us,” said Mrs. Digby, “ so we can talk what we please. His

name is Lippe; a pretty good one, too, isn't it, considering his mouth? You see, we expect to travel a good deal, Digby—that is, Mr. D. and I—before we settle down; for, since our relative, Lord Clew—poor dear man—has left us plenty of money, why shouldn't we have the good of it? That's my idea—and it's necessary that some one should understand French—for we do get *so* swindled. I don't know how it is, but there must be something about us which makes people mark us out to cheat; and yet I am sure I don't know why, for we seem formed like other people."

She went on to give a long account, from which Claude learned that this Mr. Lippe had presented himself upon somebody's recommendation, they didn't know whose, to give them a sufficient command of the French, not only to travel with less inconvenience than they had hitherto been accustomed to, but to enable them to launch with becoming grace and ease into the hitherto unexplored waters of fashionable life. Digby, to do him justice, was not ambitious of this distinction; and, although not wise, had sufficient sense to see that neither he nor his lady were exactly calculated for the sphere into which she was dragging him. In obedience to her, however—for he was too good-humoured to resist on any ordinary occasion—and from a vague idea which she had dinned into his ear, for many a day as well as night, that such a course might be advantageous to Mary, he had consented, in addition to his other experiments, to learn French. The acquisition of a new language is, alas! to any one a wearisome task. To Digby the undertaking was peculiarly unpromising. He had no memory—no ear—no ambition, and no head; the even-handed Fortune, which had sent him into the world "a relative of the late Lord Clew," and the heir to £100,000 sterling, having withheld that article, or, at least, the brains with which it is usually (if we do not use

the word in too general a sense) supplied. He hated study, having never learned anything in his life. The flattering visions of fashion, sufficient to lead his wife through any possible effort, had no place in his humbler imagination, and she half suspected that all the labour they were taking to "get into society" would be in vain. He had anticipated some pleasure from his Continental tour, but as yet he had suffered only a series of annoyances. He had been cheated, abused, and laughed at; his carriage had been broken, and once or twice he came near having his head in the same predicament; and, now that he found himself at length settled in apartments in Berlin, instead of enjoying his leisure and independence, he was set down with old "long pockets" to a lesson of three or four hours a day. It was too much; but he dared not, or, at least, did not resist; and he inwardly hoped that the period when the *pleasure* of travelling would begin, would come one of these days. If anything could have lightened his distress and perplexity, it would have been the peculiar style of teaching French adopted by Mr. Lippe. Like many vain men, he fancied he had a particular genius, and enjoyed profound draughts of self-praise in contemplating a new theory of teaching which he had created. This new system, exclusively his own, he lauded to the skies, and assured the innocent and inexperienced Digbys that, for one thaler a lesson, he would, in two months, make the whole family speak French, if not like natives, at least well enough for all the purposes of travelling and fashion. This wonderful new system consisted in teaching the pronunciation by imaginary lines drawn on the table with the finger.

There sat poor Digby—his face red, the perspiration beginning to start from his forehead, and every now and then turning half aside to indulge in a hearty yawn, which extended his jaws almost to the dimensions of those of Lippe himself; while

the latter—who was of a sanguine and frisky temperament, and who could not conceive how a man could not pronounce “*pu*” instead of “*poo*,” and “*monsieur*” instead of “*mounsheer*,” although he showed him, as plain as the nose on his face (and that was very plain indeed), the exact manner of pronouncing it, by an acute angle, drawn twenty times, one after the other, on the table—would jump up every two minutes, borne away by the enthusiasm which genius always feels in its art, thrust his hands into his trousers pockets up to the elbows, his eyes flashing fire, and then draw them out again to make new illustrative angles, circles, rhomboids, and parallelograms, on the table or in the air.

“Allons,” said he, as Claude a moment lost the train of Mrs. Digby’s chat, which, luckily, she did not interrupt by any questions to obscure this scene; “*pour le mot ‘Ulysse.’ Voyez vous, prononcez le de cette manière-ici*” (drawing a figure on the table), “*voilà! allons! commencez encore!*”

“Kall—lip—why that’s the fellow’s own name,” interrupted Digby. “Is this book about him?”

“*Allons! monsieur!*”

“*Oui, munsheer, oui. Kall—lip—so, ner—poo—vey sir, consolleydoo—*”

“Du—” cried Lippe, with an acute angle.

“Doo.”

“*Du, monsieur—*” with flashing eyes—“*du—du—du.*”

“*Doo—doo—doo—do—part doo—lysse dong—*”

“*Dans, monsieur!*” screamed the choleric Frenchman, with a fiery face, and approaching him as if he were going to knock him down.

“Well—d—n it—I say ‘dong,’” said Digby, the sweat rolling off his forehead.

“Ah! sacré diable! mais n’emporte,” he continued, recollecting himself, “*tout cela viendra—allons! continuez! dans sa—*”

“What’s John bobbing his head in here for every minute?” said Digby.

"Two tradesmen's boys—with bills—and a pine-board bedstead," said John.

"Ah," said Mrs. Digby, "it's these bills again."

The boys with their bills were admitted, and a long wrangle ensued, in which the boys demanded double charges. Mr. Lippe interpreted that the three persons were ready to swear to everything, and they wouldn't go away without being paid, which at length they were.

"Well," said Digby, "if this is what you call travelling!"

Mrs. Digby was in a rage also, and Claude could not himself help feeling indignant at the fraud which had undoubtedly been practised against the English strangers—the pine-board bedstead having been sent instead of a mahogany one which they had chosen and paid for.

While they were in the midst of the wrangle, Tom announced dinner. Claude was going to take leave, but the vehemence of their entreaties that he would stay and dine left him no alternative. He gave his arm, therefore, to Mrs. Digby, when, to his surprise, Mr. Lippe offered his to Mary, and led her in.

"Is Mr. Lippe a member of your family?" asked he.

"Oh yes. He's going to live in the house—to interpret for us—teach us French—shop with us—and do a thousand little odd jobs. I am really ashamed that he should dine at table with us in such shocking clothes—but, poor wretch!—we have sent for some new ones—and he'll be as spruce as any of us to-morrow. Poor stupid fool!"

At this moment Tom appeared again at the door, and announced a lady and gentleman to look at the rooms.

"Tell them to come to-morrow morning," said Mrs. Digby.

"They have already been, they say, once, and they will not come again."

"Well, they can't come in now ; we are at dinner."

Tom returned immediately with—

"The lady and gentleman *must* see the rooms !"

"Must !" said Mr. Digby ; "they cannot ; the family are very particularly engaged ; and they are also about going to dinner. They may see them at any time before three ; it is now nearly four."

"Ah ! bless me," said Mrs. Digby at the window, "what an elegant carriage—two footmen—splendid liveries—coachman in cocked hat—silver lace—silk stockings. Bless my soul!—who can they be ? Can they be the people who want to look at the rooms ?"

Tom now appeared again, in company with one of the richly-dressed footmen.

"The gentleman insists upon coming in—the rooms are to let—and he *must* see them."

"Really, this is very singular !" said Claude.

"They speak English, ma'am," said Tom.

"If he is a gentleman," said Claude, "I will protect you from this intrusion. Who is your master ?" said he to the footman.

"Lord Elkington," replied the man, respectfully.

"Tell Lord Elkington that the rooms are at present occupied by *ladies* who are about to dine, and beg to decline any visit of this kind at so late an hour."

"His lordship has been turned away once before on the same plea," said the man.

"The doors are open, and he may come in," said Claude, "if he pleases ; but it will be without the consent, and contrary to the wishes of the family. Say so to your master."

A gentleman and lady now appeared at the head of the stairs, having been below talking to the landlady. The man delivered the message. When he had done—

"Lead the way in, Scarlet," said Lord Elkington ; "I think these would do for us."

"I beg your pardon," said he, bowing slightly to the ladies, taking off his hat, and looking around the room with his glass.

"Did you deliver my message?" said Claude to the footman.

"Scarlet," said Elkington, without giving the man time to reply, "go down stairs!" He then turned his glass carelessly to the ceiling, curtains, carpets, fauteuils, and other furniture.

"Ah—ah—very well—but too small, I fear."

Claude stood before him very angry, and probably showing it in his attitude and manner; but the intruder seemed to care very little for his wrath. He passed his glass an instant over his face and person, and then, as if he found nothing there worthy of a second look, he prepared to leave the room after a glance at the females, for he was one of those men who subject every woman's face to an examination. On seeing Mary he stopped, and seemed evidently struck.

"I beg your pardon, my dear," said he; "I fear there has been some mistake. I was not aware that these rooms were occupied by—by—I really beg your pardon!"

"Oh, sir—my lord," said Mrs. Digby, "you are too good. If we had had the slightest idea that it was Lord Elkington—my lord!"

Elkington's eyes, during this highly amiable address, were less occupied by the courtesy of the mother than by the beauty of Mary. He regarded her with an admiration so obvious and rude as at length to cause some embarrassment on the part of the object of it, and some anger on that of Mr. Digby.

"I have unfortunately, madame," said Lord Elkington, "an appointment at this moment which prevents my explaining to you the mistake which has caused an intrusion, I fear, rather abrupt; but, with your kind permission, I will avail myself of the earliest leisure to call again and do so."

"There is not the slightest necessity," said Mr. Digby, rather bluntly.

"Oh, my lord," said Mrs. Digby, "you are so kind; I assure you, at any time—at all times—we shall be most happy, sir—my lord, I mean—to—"

During this scene Claude had stood gazing on the person thus rudely pressing into a private house, and conducting himself so singularly; and the feeling of indignation, which he could not repress, was plainly marked on his countenance. As Elkington withdrew, Claude perceived, for the first time, a female figure in the corridor. He recognised, at a glance, Lady Beverly, to whom he had rendered a slight service on the previous evening; but his attention was particularly drawn towards her attitude and the expression of her features. She was standing at her full height, the upper part of her body a little drawn back, as if she had recoiled from some object of surprise and terror. Her attitude was not unlike that of one who has just perceived a basilisk in his path, and her eyes were fixed so intently on Claude, that, as if lost in thoughts not connected with the present, she did not interrupt her gaze even when his glance met hers. She looked pale and shocked.

Elkington was by this time at her side, and they hastened to the carriage.

Numerous were the comments upon this incident as soon as the distinguished intruders were gone. Mr. Digby, redder even with anger than his previous exertions with the new system of Mr. Lippe had been able to make him, swore he would go instantly after him and "knock the puppy down."

"A man," said he, stammering, "to—to—himself here into a private family, without either civility or—or—and then to conduct himself to—to—towards my daughter!"

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Digby; "you are always such a fool. I don't see any harm in his looking at

Mary, or any one else ; and as for rudeness, I don't think one of the first leaders of the *ho-tong*, as he is, could—”

“ Well, if this is what you call *ho-tong* !” said Mr. Digby.

They now adjourned to dinner, where Mr. Lippe explained the French for the various dishes, qualifying himself for greater accuracy by devouring goodly quantities of the same. Mrs. Digby talked of many things which, “ thank Heaven, she need not be afraid to procure, as she could afford it ;” intermingling her numerous arguments upon all subjects with allusions to “ her relative, the late Lord Clew.” Mr. Lippe, notwithstanding his shabby clothes and his unhappily long ears, exhibited a satisfaction and self-complacency really enviable ; and as for Mary, satisfied with her loveliness, without attempting to increase it by the charms of wit or conversation, she ate and blushed in silence. The general talk was dull ; neither pleasing by its lightness, nor instructive by its intellectuality. Claude was rendered almost nervous, as well by the profound conceit of Lippe, and the painful and never successful struggles of Digby to remember the principal word in every sentence he uttered. He took leave, therefore, at an early hour.

CHAPTER IX.

GLAD to escape from a circle where he found so little attraction, Claude strolled through the streets. Almost unconsciously, his steps wandered towards the cabinet where he had seen the portrait. At the door he was surprised to find in his heart a kind of anxiety, as if he were seeking an interview with a

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real person, and was fearful of a disappointment. He entered, and made his way to the little room. The picture was still there. No one was present. Only a boy had greeted him as he came in, and he was busily writing in the front shop. A stream of afternoon sunshine fell through the window. The object of his attention was more striking than ever. He continued gazing with new admiration, till, whether from the fatigue of long fixed attention, or from a feeling of actual tenderness, he sighed as sincerely as if about to part for ever from a real object of affection. It was now his turn to be embarrassed, for, at a little distance, in the doorway, stood the figure of the young man whom he had met before gazing intently on this same painting. His sallow, melancholy face was shaded by a kind of stern surprise, and his eyes were fixed attentively on him.

Claude recovered himself in an instant, and said, "You will perceive I am a great amateur of painting, monsieur. I have taken a fancy to this piece—it is so pretty. I should really like to buy it."

"It is not for sale, monsieur," said the stranger, coldly.

"Then you know something of it?"

"Only that it is private property."

"Is it yours?"

"No, monsieur!"

"You are the artist, perhaps?"

The young man made no reply. Modesty and poverty are so often the companions of merit, that Claude concluded at once—from his silence, his faded clothes, his face thinned by application, and the bright glances of his eyes, which seemed full of the restless fire of genius—that he was the painter.

"I must really express my admiration," said Claude, "not only of the singular charm of the countenance, but of the exquisite beauty of the production as a work of art. If it were to be bought—"

"I have told you, monsieur, that it is not to be bought."

"Is it a fancy piece?"

"No, monsieur. He must have a very strange imagination who could create such a face; and it is, I think, quite a sufficient triumph for any artist to imitate it."

"You will confer a favour on me, then, by telling me the name of the original."

"Why se, monsieur? She can be nothing to you?"

"Very likely," said Claude; "but—"

"The person of whom this is a feeble copy," said the stranger, "exists; but you would regard her without any of the enthusiasm which you show at the sight of her picture."

"You speak in enigmas," said Claude, struck with a certain earnestness in the voice and manner of his companion.

"She is eighty years old at present," said the stranger; "and this is the copy of a portrait taken sixty-five years ago; but I interrupt you. Bon jour, monsieur."

"Great Heaven!" thought Claude, "how singular! Thus fade the dreams of youth, hope, and love. An old woman! hobbling with a crutch, perhaps, around a silent chamber; those tender eyes dimmed; the sweetness of that mouth gone; the pure hue of health and youth faded; infirmity—wrinkles—age! and, instead of joy, and hope, and artless affection, only the traces of faded dreams—of broken affections—of lost friends—of vanished pleasures. Oh! vanity of the world; oh! phantoms of life!"

And thus all his reveries at last ended in a moral, which, being duly digested, he went to the theatre.

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning, at twelve, a richly-liveried *chasseur* announced Count Carolan. It was the hour of the appointment, and Claude was ready to receive him. It was the first time they had met, and they seemed mutually pleased with each other. Claude's appearance was calculated to make a favourable impression on a man of *ton* like Carolan. Considerably above the middle height, and at once striking the attention as a handsome man, he was one of the few who to personal advantages add the charm which springs from mind and character. His form was erect and commanding, with that military air which ensures respect; and his countenance, refined and noble, conveyed an impression of a nature whose gentler attributes were governed by a high order of energy and courage. His voice was sweet and well modulated, and his manners that of one accustomed to society, and who had the repose and polish, without the frivolity and *mannerism*, which so often distinguish a mere *homme à la mode*.

Count Carolan was a different sort of person. He also was a handsome man, not equal in height to the ordinary standard, with the air and appearance of a perfect gentleman, and unusually pleasing in his manners. He made himself very agreeable, asked Claude after Lord Perceval, and alluded to the favourable impression he had left upon Madame Wharton, whom he had declared to be a superior woman. In reply to some inquiries after her, he said,

"She has been in a higher position in life, but, I fear, not in a happier; and we have, from delicacy, always abstained from asking details of circumstances which she appears anxious to banish alto-

gether from her mind. She is contented with us, and she has been of inestimable service to my daughter. By-the-way, I hope you will not forget us to-day at four."

The count's carriage was at the door, and they proceeded to their calls without farther delay. It was three o'clock before the count dropped him again at his hotel. They had seen many, and left cards on many more distinguished persons. He was still more favourably impressed with his new friend after this interview, and a sincere regard appeared to have sprung up between them; a slight pomposity of manner, which would scarcely attract his attention if he had not heard it alluded to, occasionally jarred upon the pleasures of the ride; but Claude amiably reasoned that every man had his foibles, and it was wise to shut one's eyes to all but the good in those with whom we associate.

At four o'clock he was at the door of Carolan's splendid palace, the exterior of which he had already so much admired. A file of carriages, the servants in full livery, were driving up and off again, having set down their company upon a carpet which extended into the street. A crowd was gathered about the door to see them alight. He passed into the broad and lofty hall, with large vases and graceful statues rising around, and crowded with rows of handsome men, glittering in liveries of velvet and gold. Ascending the low flight of richly-carpeted steps, and passing through an antechamber and several other ample and magnificently furnished rooms, of which the air was full of incense, and still between files of domestics, stationed at short intervals from each other, he at length reached that one where such of the guests as were already arrived awaited the coming of the rest. Count Carolan received him at the door in the most gracious manner, and, after shaking him heartily by the hand, led him forward, and presented him to the countess :

a very fine-looking woman of five-and-forty, whose unobtrusive dress and affable manners pleased him at once. She made the usual inquiries, and was evidently struck with his distinguished appearance. He had time, however, to extend to her but a few brief remarks, when Carolan, taking him again by the arm, brought him to Madame Wharton, whose face lighted with pleasure at the sight of him. With a single shake of the hand, and a greeting on either side more than friendly, he was led on and presented to several other distinguished persons, on whom he had called in the morning.

“But where is my daughter—where’s Ida?” said Carolan. “Oh—I see—let me beg you—my dear—Mr. Wyndham.”

Claude turned and bowed, scarcely seeing to whom, for the girlish figure to whom these words were addressed was facing a lady who occupied a seat by her on a divan. She lifted her eyes with a slight salutation, and Claude was about to address her with some commonplace remark, when, with great surprise, he perceived the image of the portrait, perfect as if reflected in a mirror, except that the smile, as it came and passed away—the eyes, as they were raised and lowered again modestly, beneath his unguarded look of astonishment, brought to it new beauties—the charm of motion—the loveliness which the rising colour and the low sweet voice alone can give. It was not till Count Carolan had twice repeated “Mr. Wyndham,” in the act of presenting him to Lady Beverly, and uttered the word “Lord Elkington,” that he recovered from his surprise to perceive the form of Lady Beverly drawn up coldly to his half unconscious greeting; and to behold Elkington gazing at him through his glass, and returning his bow with a reserve which, little regarded at the time, was subsequently recalled to memory.

At this moment a servant announced dinner. The

ladies, escorted by those whose rank entitled them to the honour, led the way into the dining-room. Elkington gave his arm to the young Countess Ida. Madame Wharton was among the last. No one seemed disposed to conduct her. She was, for a moment, slightly embarrassed. Claude hastened to her side, and in a few moments they were seated next each other at table.

The dinner-service corresponded with the other marks of the munificent host's wealth. A royal table could scarcely be more superbly laid with gold and silver, in striking forms and of rich workmanship. All this was rendered more splendid by the size and magnificence of the hall and its furniture, the exquisite master-pieces of paintings which adorned the walls, the rich ceilings and inlaid floor. The Countess Ida sat opposite Claude, a little on his left, and Madame Carolan on his right. The conversation, instead of being general, divided itself into little coteries, with as much freedom as if each were at a table of his own. Claude glanced at the young girl whose appearance had so much surprised him. She was talking with Elkington. He could not hear what they said, but the tones of a sweet voice reached him. He looked at her with perfect impunity, for she never turned her eyes towards him, and was obviously unconscious of his presence, as of his existence. He watched her features to behold if the faultless perfection, which rendered them so lovely in repose, disappeared when she spoke or laughed. But no; the charm which the artist had seized was but a small part of that with which Heaven had invested her. There was as much to bewilder in the tone of her voice as in the expression of her eyes. There was as much danger in her motion as in the outline of her face and form. Who could the stranger be who had so impudently misinformed him? What was his reason? His eye passed from her form and countenance to that of

her companion, Lord Elkington. There was something in him which displeased him, he scarce knew why. He was aroused by Madame Wharton, who, in a tone full of playful kindness, uttered the word "Well!"

He started as if detected in some culpable action.

"Upon my word," said she, laughing, "you are caught at last."

"Indeed, madame," said Claude, stammering in spite of himself.

"Oh, monsieur — no apologies — no excuses. Ought I not to say now, in my capacity of Mentor, Are these the thoughts, oh Telemachus, which should occupy the mind of the son of Ulysses? Does it become you to yield at the first sight of the enemy? you, who were so confident when no danger was near?"

"I acknowledge, oh Mentor," replied Claude, laughing, "the justice of your reproof. It but shows, by another example, how rash is youth in daring danger, and how weak in overcoming it."

"But, without jesting, how do you like my favourite. Have I over-described her?"

"With your supernatural penetration," said Claude, "you would not believe me if I denied that she greatly surpasses my expectations. But I am already acquainted with her countenance."

"You have seen the portrait, taken by the Professor —. It is to appear at the exhibition."

"And the gentleman is your famous Lord Elkington?"

"It is. How do you like him?"

Claude hesitated.

"Remember, you are my pupil," continued she. "I must have no secrets."

"If I dared to form or express an opinion on such slight grounds," said Claude, "and in so short a time."

"You may express *any* opinion to me," said Madame Wharton; "I assure you I shall be discreet."

"Well, then, I don't like him!"

"It is curious," said Madame Wharton, "but he makes the same impression upon me. At first I liked him much. But, the more I see him, the more this favourable impression wears off."

"Shall I not be taking too great a liberty in asking whether she is actually affianced?"

"It is so nearly settled that I regard it as irrevocable. The count is very anxious. Madame de Carolan is always submissive to her husband's wishes, and Lady Beverly is singularly interested."

"But the young lady herself?"

"Young ladies, in this part of the world, have not much to say on these subjects. She would as soon think of disobeying her parents in any other affair of life as in this. She has been brought up so. She considers it her duty, and I believe she would sacrifice anything to that."

"This *will* be a sacrifice, then?"

"Oh no, I do not say that; on the contrary, she is evidently attached to Lord Elkington!"

If Claude had not before perceived that he was considerably interested in the questions he was putting, the disappointment which came over him, as he received this annunciation, would have convinced him. He turned his eyes upon her again. She was still talking with Elkington. He had just said something, apparently, which surprised and pleased her; and she had drawn a little back, and was looking in his face with an expression of earnest delight and animation. There was in her countenance a certain expression of confiding familiarity. He withdrew his glance, determined to look no more. He occupied himself the rest of the hour with Madame Wharton, who gave him much information respecting the principal persons at table; among whom were many of the foreign ministers, some celebrated travellers, the most fashionable women of the *société*, and two or three individuals who had a European

reputation, and whose names were destined to be familiar to posterity.

The dinner was over in a short time. The gentlemen rose with the ladies, and all adjourned once more to the drawing-room, where coffee, &c., were taken, during a conversation more social and gay than that which had preceded the dinner. Claude spoke again with Carolan, and with several others who recognised him, or to whom he was presented. Among them were several dashing young men. He remarked particularly Count de Laval, Lord Beaufort, and a Mr. Thomson. They were extremely polite, particularly the latter, who begged to be presented to him. He offered, in a very pressing manner, all kinds of services and counsel, and asked to be permitted the pleasure of calling on him at his hotel. Lord Beaufort, after the usual greeting, merely remarked that it was "devilish stupid;" that "the people seemed all dying of *ennui*;" that he thought "the dinner would last an eternity." Laval informed Claude that a fine opera was to be given at six, which would be attended by "everybody." Two or three ambassadors, and other leaders of the ton, told him they should be most happy to see him at their houses on certain evenings of the week; and both Madame and Monsieur Carolan were particular in making him promise to come the next evening at nine to their ball and supper, of which they gave one a week through the winter. While he was talking with Countess Carolan, the latter called Ida to say something to her which demanded a reply, and led to a kind of dispute. Claude was appealed to. A feeling, not unnatural in one of his character, but very ridiculous, threw over him a kind of reserve—a hauteur—when he found himself compelled to address her. As if she supposed this either his natural manner, or perhaps timidity, with a sweetness of nature which touched him with compunction even while he replied, she added a few

words, which he answered with a distant politeness so different from his air while conversing with others, that the young girl observed it. A colour rose to her cheek, and, as two persons who felt that there was no congeniality between them, and almost a dislike, they parted. A few moments afterward, while he was laughing and talking very gayly with a lovely woman, he saw Ida sitting alone; then Elkington approached her, her face lighted up, and he felt that this handsome young lord possessed her affection.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM the Carolans, Claude went to the opera. The house was already full; and he was surprised to see the large proportion of officers, whose glittering uniforms, combined with the elegant toilets of the ladies, and the ample box in front, furnished with chairs, and decorated with particular splendour for the members and guests of the royal family, added greatly to the effect of the scene. Presently the royal box was filled with princes and princesses, with their *maréchals*, *chambellans*, *grande-maitresses*, and *dames d'honneur*, forming a circle extremely imposing. It was, indeed, the whole Prussian court, surrounded by the *corps diplomatique* and the principal nobility of the town.

Claude had scarcely taken the seat which the box-keeper procured for him, when a familiar "Bon soir, Wyndham," behind him, and a hand laid gently on his shoulder, attracted his attention to Lord Beaufort.

"How are you?" said he. "You don't mean to stay here through the whole piece, I hope?"

"Certainly," said Claude; "I came for that purpose."

"You'll be suffocated," said he. "I would not remain through one act for a much better opera."

"Indeed?"

"They murder music here. It's shocking, positively."

"Why, I understood," said Claude, disappointed, "that I should hear some excellent music."

"Nothing can be more horrid; however, it's better than one of Carolan's dinners. Such bores. I really—can't endure them. Can you?"

"On the contrary," said Claude, "I—"

"Ah! I see—you're a stranger. They're very well at first, but, after once or twice, they're *épouvantables!* Carolan's such a pompous ass. It puts me in mind of a phrase of Voltaire's: 'I can never talk with his excellency without wishing to horse-whip him!'"

"Oh, you are severe."

"No, upon my honour; and then their exertions to marry that girl of theirs. It's disgusting—positively."

"Are you speaking of the young Countess Ida?"

"Yes; didn't you see all dinnertime? She's as bad as they. A rich English lord, who is to be an earl, is rather a fat fish in the net of a Prussian count."

"You don't mean to suspect that lovely girl of *fishng* for Lord Elkington?" said Claude, with surprise.

"I know she does," said Beaufort, coolly. "They're all mad after him. She's got him, too, they say. Though he's a complete puppy—*entre nous*—and as great a—Ah, how are you, Elkington?"

The door had opened at the moment, and the Carolans, with Elkington and Lady Beverly, came in. He had scarcely exchanged salutations when Lavalle and Thomson entered also.

“ Well, here comes that fool Thomson,” whispered Beaufort. “ I am off ; he’s a little too polite for me. Adieu !” and he took his leave for another box.

Lavalle saluted Claude warmly. They already seemed, by a kind of presentiment, to mark each other out for friends. Thomson, who had taken a profound liking to Claude, made a profusion of bows, shaking him most affectionately by the hand ; begged him to take another place nearer the stage, which, he assured him, he would find more convenient ; asked if he had a bill, and, on finding that he had not, resigned his own, insisting upon his keeping it, as he perfectly well knew the piece, and had not the slightest occasion for it. He even offered to hold his hat, but this Claude objected to ; and, although his very amiable companion protested that he “ really liked to hold hats at an opera—it was an occupation for him—it gave him something to do,” Claude begged to be allowed to retain his himself.

The house was now full and quietly seated. The curtain had risen, and the opera was proceeding, when, at a moment when there was an interval of comparative silence, as well among the audience as on the scene, the box door was opened, and a considerable bustle and rustle announced the entrance of new-comers. They proved to be the Digbys. Madame was *en grand toilet*, and Digby was so much over-dressed as to attract towards both a general attention. They made also a good deal of noise. The notice thus drawn upon them was not the less continued from the appearance of Mary. She had the taste to dress becomingly ; and her very beautiful face and form, exhibiting all the fulness of youth and health, never appeared to more striking advantage. It seemed that every eye and glass in the house were turned towards them, and they excited, indeed, such obvious remark—Digby and his hon-

est dame by their conspicuous dress and the noise they made, and Mary by the loveliness of a face not seen before in the Berlin circles—that admiration by the gentlemen, comments by the ladies, and inquiries by both were quite audible, and the Carolans turned to see who it was. At this moment, with the eyes of the whole house upon them, and almost in a position as public as that of the actors on the stage, the Digbys recognised Claude, and nothing would answer but a general and hearty shaking of hands, and divers exclamations of delight and surprise. Mrs. Digby thought, like many of her betters, that notoriety was distinction, and that the more she could be conspicuous the better effect she should have upon this her *début* in the fashionable world. As Claude and Mary stood together a moment, while the party were arranging themselves in their seats, various whispers flew through the house that they were a rich and noble English family; that they were intimate relatives of “Lord Clew;” that “*la jeune Anglaise*” was about to marry Monsieur de Wyndham, who had come with them to Berlin, that the ceremony might be performed and the honeymoon spent in this gay metropolis. Some said Mr. Digby was Lord Clew himself. Mrs. Digby was completely inflated and off her balance with the delight of being, with her darling and lovely daughter, the object of such general and respectful attention. Claude saw Ida look at Mary with evident admiration as the latter seated herself beside him, and lifted her eyes with her usual blush to his face. There was no reason why he should care what opinion the young countess might form of him or of his affairs, and yet he was a little embarrassed that she should see him so apparently familiar with a person who, however pretty, was, after all, a sad simpleton. Elkington also, at the same time, turned, and, as their eyes met, Claude bowed. Elkington eyed him coolly through his glass, but did not

make any reply. What rendered this more unpleasant was, that Ida saw it, and obviously with surprise. There is in nature no particular indignity in bowing one's head to a person who does not choose to bow in return, but there are few things more likely to arouse one's indignation. This, with several other circumstances, awakened his observation respecting both Lord Elkington and his mother, of whom the latter had several times regarded him with a fixed attention, much more marked than anything in their relative position rendered natural. He resolved to avail himself of the very earliest opportunity to ascertain, for his satisfaction at least, whether the slight put upon him by Elkington was intended or accidental. Elkington, as if conscious of his thought, turned that instant, and Ida also. Claude leaned forward, and said,

“ Good evening, Lord Elkington.”

The young man resumed his original position with such perfect coolness, that even yet, for a moment, it was scarcely possible to believe his conduct intentional.

“ My dear Mr. Wyndham,” said Mrs. Digby, in a voice too loud not to excite attention, “ I can never—do you know—remember the name of the thing they look through—the spyglass. I always call mine the spyglass.”

“ The *opera-glass*, you mean.”

“ Yes—the spyglass—or the opera-glass—in English it's all the same thing, you know; but I mean the *French* name.”

“ *Lorgnette*,” said Claude.

“ *Milles remercimengs!*” said Madame Digby, with an affectation which Claude had never seen in her before. “ Do you know we've left ours *chez nous*. That John of mine, as usual, forgot it.”

“ Well—if she will be eternally giving me things to—to—my pocket,” said Digby.

“ John,” said Madame Digby, with a look of

intense reproof; "pray, Mr. Wyndham, have you one?"

"No," said Claude, anxious to stop this interesting conversation by whispered and monosyllabic replies.

"Couldn't you borrow one? for I am positively lost without it."

"No," said Claude.

"She bought it to-day—and never had one before in her life," whispered Mr. Digby, with a wry face, aside to Claude.

"Do you speak English, mounseer?" said Mrs. Digby to an old gentleman behind her, with a red face and white hair, and a riband in his button-hole.

The old gentleman replied only by pursing up his mouth and brows into a piteous expression of futile politeness, and shrugging his shoulders to intimate that he could not understand her.

"Do *you*, mounseer?" demanded Mrs. Digby of another.

The last said some words which were entirely unintelligible to her, but, bowing with great affability, handed her a bill.

"Did you ever see such a set of born fools?" said Madame Digby.

Claude cast his eyes towards Mary. She was in the full crisis of a blush, and he smiled and leaned over her to speak. From her awkward habit of blushing, it was rather a dangerous matter to speak to her in the presence of others without letting them hear what was said, for it might be supposed, from her manner of receiving the most indifferent remark, that she was in the act of yielding to a red-hot declaration of love. By one of those chances which lovers complain of, Ida turned again at this moment to speak to her father, who sat behind her, and she saw the head of Claude bent over towards Mary's, and the heightened colour of the silly girl could not have been unnoticed. It seemed, however, as if she

desired to exonerate herself from any participation in the rudeness of Elkington, for she slightly bent her head and smiled. There was kindness, there was almost confidence in her expression. Their eyes met, and Claude, with a sense of relief, was satisfied that she was not only astonished, but displeased at the rudeness of her companion. His look of pleasure was so true and lively that it seemed to surprise her. Claude looked at Elkington. He could just perceive his features, and that there was a cloud upon his brow. A sense of pleasure kindled a moment in his heart, but died away as he remembered that he was indulging in a very unusual admiration for one who, in fact, was all but the wife of another.

"Why, who on *airth* is that?" said Madame Digby.

It was not in Claude's nature to do an unamiable act, and he told her. The good dame was in such a flutter of enjoyment, and so unconscious of doing anything wrong, and she seemed to count with so much confidence on his services, that, however annoyed by her loud talk and fidgety manner, he did not wish to offend her.

"What, are they the ones we talked about in the stage-coach?"

"Yes."

"Why, you don't say so!—dear me!—bless my soul!"

Here she whispered John, who whispered Mary; and then Mrs. Digby, fearful that Mary might not hear, leaned over a little old gentleman's lap behind her, and whispered Mary herself, and the word "Carolan" was heard rather audibly repeated several times. This must have been particularly edifying to the count, who sat on the second seat and heard it all, without being himself recognised by the lady who was so anxiously scrutinizing the female members of his family.

"Well! I don't really think she is so very pretty," said Mrs. Digby. "She ain't to be compared to our Mary!"

"If her nose was a little longer," said Digby.

"And as for the countess—that big woman's the countess, I suppose—ain't she, Mr. Wyndham? And who's the tall one with long curls? Don't you know her? Why—no—yes—no—it is—as sure as you live," continued Mrs. Digby, "there's Lord Elkington."

"D—n him—so he is!" said Digby.

"Well, I wonder he doesn't see Mary," said Mrs. Digby.

Here Mr. Digby half hummed over the air which the singer was giving from the stage. It happened to be a favourite one; and the noise in the box occasioned a call for order and silence, accompanied by one or two hisses from the pit; and the old gentleman, upon whose lap Mrs. Digby had just rested, and who had for some time leaned aside, with his open hand to his ear by way of a trumpet, at once to receive the sound of the music and to exclude that of the conversation, which had thrown him into a high state of angry excitement, turned upon Mr. Digby with a glance so furious that he stopped humming instantly, to listen to a harangue about thirty seconds in duration, accompanied by corresponding gestures, in the German language.

"Oh—certainly—by all means—mounseer!" said Digby. "If that is really your opinion, I myself think differently."

And here Mrs. Digby and Mary fell into a fit of laughing, which they could not at once repress.

Matters here rested for half an hour; but Claude was next annoyed by Mrs. Digby's requesting to be presented to the Countess Ida.

"I want to see if she's as pretty close as she is far off. I don't believe a word of it."

Claude assured her that it was out of the question

to present people at the opera. And, with the view of getting rid of her, he lifted the seat in front of him, which by some accident had remained unoccupied, and took the place. Although not in the same box, this brought him by the side of Ida. A slight salutation passed again between them. He then carelessly cast his eyes over the surface of heads in the pit. Every face there was turned towards the scene with one exception. A young man in the centre fixed his eyes on the box. He recognised his face immediately. It was the poor and eccentric artist who had misinformed him respecting the portrait of Ida. At first he thought he was looking towards himself; but, finding that he did not withdraw his eyes when he returned it, he saw that Ida was the object of his attention, and that his glance was riveted upon her.

"Will you permit me to ask if you know the young person in the pit whose face is turned towards you?" said Claude.

Ida looked in the direction indicated, and perceived him at once.

"Certainly—very well," she replied, after saluting affably the young stranger.

"He is a poor artist, I believe," said Claude, "and has painted a charming portrait of you; but I have not heard his name."

"An artist—he?" said Ida. "He paint my picture? Not he—poor fellow! He is a teacher of languages—Mons. Rossi."

"Indeed!" said Claude.

"He has given me lessons in Italian for some time, and continues still to do so. Papa pities him; he is very poor; and he is, besides, so punctual, so attentive, and takes such pains to please—"

As Claude looked on Ida, he conceived a suspicion of the secret of this poor fellow's misery; his gazing on the portrait—his refusal to name her—his sigh—and his fixed attention to her during the

present evening. While he pitied, he could not blame him. He felt that, were he himself called to her side an hour every day, he might be as audacious and as wild; and once more a cold reserve came over his manner, and his abrupt transition seemed to surprise and embarrass her.

"Do you speak English, mem?" said Madame Digby, leaning over and addressing Ida.

"A little!" was the modest and polite reply.

"Well, mem, thank God! and so do I; and I'm really glad, mem, to hear my own language so well spoke in foreign parts."

Ida slightly bowed, with a smile.

"Not but that I speak French, mem, also—*unpoo*, but I prefer the English infinitely, as any other person of sense must. It's so much—so—so—much—*easier*, mem."

Ida looked at Claude as if for some explanation, having already seen him on terms of such apparent intimacy. That young gentleman's amiability was ebbing fast. He began to wish he had cut the Digbys long ago, and he felt as if the earth's opening and swallowing him at once would be a fate altogether too delightful.

"Will you be so good as to lend me your spy-glass?" said Mrs. Digby. "Thank you, mem; it's so *very* far from here to the stage, that one does not know whether the actors are there or not."

After a considerable turning and twisting with the "spyglass," pulling it quite out and shutting it quite in, and several "dear me's" and "bless my souls," Mrs. Digby handed it back with,

"Thank you, mem!"

And then, from the quiet manner of Ida, suspecting that she had not made a favourable impression, she added,

"I hope, mem, you'll not think me for'erd in opening the conversation. I should not have presumed to do so, only our *very* intimate friend, Mr.

Wyndham, has spoken so much of you, that I really feel as if we were old acquaintances. I hope there's no harm done, mem?"

"Not in the least," said Ida.

"Well, mem, that's right. I was sure there wasn't."

Elkington, who had been looking and listening during this conversation, here whispered the Countess Carolan, and then to his mother, who sat next to Ida. Lady Beverly also whispered Ida, and rose. Claude heard Ida's voice: "No, I assure you, not in the least!" and then Lady Beverly: "Yes, my dear, your mother wishes it." Ida accordingly rose and changed places with Lady Beverly, while Elkington took that just occupied by Ida. This brought him next to Claude, but he turned his shoulder towards him as he looked upon the scene, and did not alter his position during the evening.

"I hope, mem," commenced Mrs. Digby, about to address a remark across Elkington's shoulder to Lady Beverly; but that lady, with a start, and a countenance of surprise and anger, regarded the honest dame a moment in a way which effectually discouraged her from farther proceedings.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN the opera was over, Claude was met in the lobby by Lavalley and Beaufort. The Carolan party came out, and the countess stopped to speak with him.

"I have been requested to bring you this evening with us to Madame de B——'s. Will you go? Come to us, then, in half an hour. She is the lady of the —— ambassador, and she will expect you. Adieu! I shall see you presently." —

Carolán then came out, and also said a few words to Claude.

"You are to go with madame this evening to Madame de B——'s. I am engaged; you will be her *chevalier*."

"I am too happy to be at her orders," said Claude.

The footman now came up with the cloaks, and announced the carriage.

Ida's "good-night" to Claude in his own language sounded like music.

"*Dieu ! est elle belle ?*" said Lavallo, kissing the ends of his gloved fingers, and turning up his eyes in a sort of half affected rapture.

"She's well enough," said Beaufort, "but her face is silly. It wants expression."

"Good-evening, mem!" said Mrs. Digby, as she caught the eye of Ida; and then, brushing by Lady Beverly, she followed the footman to her carriage, while Digby, with Mary, came after.

The Carolans had gone on, and were out of sight as Elkington came out of the box so as to meet Mary. He stopped her.

"I hope you are well this evening, and that you will permit me to call and make my excuses to you for the apparent rudeness of which I was guilty the other day?"

"Oh yes — always — certainly — my lord," said Mary, with a deep blush.

"Indeed, I shall take the liberty very soon," said he; and with a look of admiration, and without looking at Claude, he gave his arm to his mother and passed on.

The young men accompanied Claude a part of the way to his hotel, and made various comments, with much zest, upon persons, male and female, of the society whose acquaintance he had not yet formed. Monsieur de This, Mademoiselle de That, and Madame de the Other, were here arraigned with very little ceremony, and were occasionally dismiss-

ed with a lively or facetious estimate, probably far short of their respective opinions of themselves.

The invitation which Claude had received from Madame de Carolan was given and accepted in a minute, and he scarcely understood its import.

Was he to escort that lady to Madame de B——'s? and was Ida to be of the party?

The necessary alterations in his toilet were soon made. In less than half an hour he was at Carolan's. Ida and her father were in the drawing-room.

"You come in time," said the count, "for I must go;" and he left them almost immediately. Claude found himself alone with the person with whom, in spite of his general good sense and his sober principle of right, he was, each hour, each moment, becoming more fascinated. A short conversation ensued. Claude was reserved and distant. He was determined to give no token of the power which this young girl already began to exercise over him. His courtesy, while it was all that a gentleman could bestow, made her think his character haughty and his heart cold.

Their short interview was presently interrupted by the entrance of Madame Wharton, and then of the countess, and the carriage was announced at the same moment. On their way to Madame de B——'s a lively conversation was carried on between the countess and himself. Ida remained silent. It was the first time she had ever found herself almost proudly repulsed, and her glance, so much valued, so gratefully acknowledged by all she had met before, not only unsought, but apparently undesired. A feeling of dislike arose in her heart, but it was mingled with pique and curiosity. With all her advantages of person and character, she had a modest opinion of herself; and it could not enter into her inexperienced mind that the young stranger, who almost rudely withdrew from her careless affability, was more capable of appreciating her and more

ready to admire, than any one she had met before, and that it was a consciousness of her power and his own danger which repelled a man of honour from her side. Once, as a lamp cast its light upon her face through the carriage window, Claude fixed his eyes upon it, himself in the shadow. It was thoughtful as of one alone, and as touched with perfect beauty as a head by Guido. A sentiment of admiration, of love, entered his breast. He felt himself in the presence of one formed to impress and sway him with a word or look, and yet so far beyond his reach that it was a crime to think of her. There was something in this hopeless passion—thus full-born within him in an instant, as if by inspiration—for a being so exalted, so lovely, so guarded by all the haughty distinctions of rank and wealth—which suited his romantic and melancholy nature, his passionate and high imagination. His course through the world had been *alone*. It had been like a wanderer in a bark over a dark sea, without companion by his side or light above; and this young girl broke upon him like a star, whose loved beams, however distant, however cold, might cheer his gloom and guide him on his solitary track. The spell was thrown over him in that careless moment. He yielded that kind of tender and unqualified worship which is one of the charms of youth, genius, and purity of character.

At the Countess de B——'s he found all the society assembled. The affable hosts received him with pleasure. The half dozen saloons and ball-room were thronged. He recognised, in a distant corner of the room, Lady Beverly seated, with her glass to her eye, and peering at him through the crowd with an earnest watchfulness of his motions, which again surprised him.

Presently Lavalley addressed him.

“ You don't dance ? ”

“ Oh yes ! ”

“ Let me make you acquainted with Mademoiselle de Vigne.” The young lady was very pretty and lovely, and spoke English perfectly well. She had dark hair and eyes, and appeared enjoying a state of health and spirits which had never been disturbed by a care.

“ You are very much *lié* with the Carolans,” said she, as they paused in the dance.

“ I like them much.”

“ And what an *angel* Ida is !”

“ Do you think her pretty ?”

“ Oh ! I think her the most *perfect* creature in the whole *world* ; do not you ?”

“ She is certainly pretty,” said Claude, smiling at her enthusiasm.

“ Oh, I am sure. Such a *heavenly* countenance—such an *angelic* figure—such a *beautiful* manner—and then, oh Dieu ! she draws and plays—and sings and dances—all the gentlemen are in love with her. They say a *great* many have broken their hearts for her.”

“ Yes ?”

“ Oh yes. Her father is an excellent person—but, oh Dieu ! so proud. But she has made a superb *partie*, and she is so happy—everybody *adores* her !”

“ Lord Elkington, then, is certainly going to marry her ?”

“ Oh dear, yes.”

“ And is she attached to Lord Elkington ?”

“ Oh, certainly. How can she help it ? Do you not think him *very* handsome ?”

“ Rather so.”

“ And such a *delightful* person—so amiable—so lovely and clever—such a *good-hearted* man—what a beautiful and happy couple they will make ! I assure you, they are the talk and admiration of everybody ; and then Lady Beverly—such a *charming* woman !”

Claude could not but compare the artlessness of
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this pretty child—who had known nothing of life but its joys, and who was just emerging from the shelters of her home into a world which she expected to find for ever all sunshine and flowers—with Beaufort, who piqued himself upon being *blasé*.

“Are you acquainted with Madame Wharton?” asked she, after finishing another turn in the dance.

“Oh yes. She is a very great favourite of mine.”

“Everybody thinks her such an estimable woman. She has brought Ida up so admirably—but do you know,” she added, mysteriously, “that no one can tell *anything* of her earlier history!”

“Indeed!”

“She was an English lady, they say—very rich—but no one knows the *least* about her affairs. They *do* say that—”

But here the fair narrator was obliged to resume her dancing; and then the *contre-dance* was finished; and then a tall, blooming-faced young officer, with his clothes made very tight, so as to exhibit a slender and elegant form to the utmost advantage, came up in great haste, and claimed her hand for the next dance, and Claude did not get near her again during the evening, though he often saw her light and girlish figure whirling in the waltz, in all the unclouded enjoyment of innocence and youth.

Whenever Lavalley met him, he took occasion to enter into conversation with him. He liked him more and more, and discovered in him a mind superior to the general order of more fashionable men. Thomson annoyed him by a constant series of civilities, which he could scarcely withdraw from, as they seemed to be the result of an ever obliging disposition. His principal pleasure, however, appeared to be to talk of, or form a party at whist, as this seemed to be the engrossing subject of his reflection, and the principal enjoyment of his life. In the course of the evening, Claude passed Elkington several times without any sign of mutual recog-

dition. With Lady Beverly it was the same. She was always stately and cold, and appeared to overlook him, although more than once, when she did not think herself observed, she regarded him with a scrutiny for which he could not account.

At twelve the supper was over and the company began to disperse. Claude found his ever faithful Carl in the hall with his cloak, and was about returning to his hotel, when Thomson insisted that he should join Lavallo, Beaufort, and two or three others at his rooms for a rubber of whist. Lavallo urged his compliance. He found that Thomson, who was an Englishman of respectable family, lived with considerable style. A circle of young men of independent fortune met there. Several were elegant and highly cultivated persons, destined subsequently to take their stand in the world, and perhaps in history; while many were merely the careless characters of a day, who pass their lives without trouble or reflection, in a narrow circle of amusements, taking little care to cultivate understandings which they might have rendered useful to their country. To him, however, they were all alike affable, and he passed several gay hours at the whist-table. They chatted, smoked, supped, and played, and it was near three when Claude found himself in the street alone on his return home.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was a pleasant night. The air was still and clear without being cold, and very refreshing and agreeable. The moon was in the wane, and had just risen, casting a singular radiance over the earth and heaven. Having supped heartily, and, with

several new and interesting topics of reflection, being too fully awake to think of sleep, he determined to prolong his stroll around the town. The streets were silent and lonely. Here and there the night-watch went slowly by, with his long, shrill whistle, as if ingeniously contrived to disturb the sick, to awaken the sleeping, and to do service to none except thieves and robbers, who, thus warned, get to their hiding-places till he is out of the way. Before the palaces of princes and military officers of high standing, and the public edifices, the guards paced slowly to and fro, in their simple gray cloaks and leathern caps, their muskets glittering in the moonbeams; and once during his ramble he was crossed by a company of fifteen or twenty soldiers, on their rounds to relieve guard, their measured tramp echoing on the pavement, and reminding him that he was in the metropolis of one of the greatest military governments of Europe.

Claude went on, now indulging in his own reveries, now watching the broad, level streets, so beautiful in the moonlight, and the sculptured palaces, with their shadowy courts and half-unearthly company of statues; now listening to the whistle of the watch, as it retreated and died away in the distance. At length he found himself before the Brandenburg gate, and paused to admire the tall columns, the stately outline, and the bronze group upon the top. The guard at the gate made no question as he passed out to extend a ramble so delightful into the wood. It was the hour for calm thought, and he had many subjects of reflection. The principal one was the young girl with whom he had become acquainted in so curious a manner, and who seemed the embodying of his fairest visions of woman. He had been struck with her character as described by Madame Wharton—an authority the best that could exist on such a subject. That of a mother would have been partial; that of a friend might have been

drawn from imperfect sources. His own experience he could have placed but little confidence in, for he knew how different a thing woman often is in her real mind from what she appears when invested with the charm of beauty and seen in the walks of pleasure. It is probable that, without the previous eulogies of Madame Wharton, the grace and loveliness of Ida would not have succeeded in impressing him so seriously. Every one will not sympathize with a young man who cannot fall in love till assured by better authority than his own observations of the merit of the object. But this was Claude's character; imbued with thought, his feelings, or at least his actions, were subservient to his reason. His lonely life had rendered contemplation almost too habitual to him. He had dwelt too long and too much on the valuelessness of the earthly objects so ardently sought by his fellow-creatures. For, after all, the everlasting homilies on the evanescence of existence, while they rarely arrest the thoughtless in their pursuit of pleasure or the wicked in their career of guilt, often render the contemplative unnecessarily sad, and deprive the unhappy of sources of distraction from solemn realities which a benevolent Providence did not intend should appal or overshadow us. To Claude most of the objects of life were phantoms—most of its joys illusions. He wanted the development of his affections to balance and perfect his character, and to counteract the results of a too exclusive development of his intellectual faculties. He had lived in a world of thought. He wanted to descend into the warmer one of feeling. His mind had occupied itself with subjects vast, high, and eternal. He had not studied society and common life with sufficient attention. Such a mind may be great if occasion presents, but cannot be contented in the world where we are destined to live. Some author observes with a true philosophy, "Bad as men may

be, Providence intends that we shall love them." The uncompromising energy of Claude's character, and the independence of an original thinker, made the path of youth one of danger, and caused him, in many things, to stand aloof from other men.

As he wandered on, Elkington, his singular insolence—Lady Beverly, her unaccountable curiosity, which seemed to watch his actions and search into his soul—recurred to his memory. The former he resolved to avoid if possible, and he determined never to deviate from the cold courtesy which should avert a quarrel. The anger with which he had received his rudeness passed away under the fields of heaven. He reflected that it was not in the power of such a man to insult him.

He paused at these thoughts and gazed upward. The air was strangely clear; for nature, as if seeking higher praise than man's, seems to put on more wonderful beauty when his eye no longer gazes on it. An indescribable peace and lustre reigned everywhere: upon the piles of motionless and silver clouds, the steady-beaming planets, and the far off, ever-burning groups of stars. He gazed long and intently with a fervid wonder. There flowed the Milky Way, rolling its snowy and noiseless waves through the track of blue. He gazed almost breathless into its eternal depths. There was Orion, mounting heavenward with his glittering belt; and there—at rest amid this revolving multitude—the point on which seemed to hang all this infinite sphere of worlds—half seen, and undistinguished by the common eye—the wanderer's guide—the lover's hope—the type, in its constancy, of how few hearts!—lay the polar star.

As he lost himself in the contemplation of this sublime scene and the thoughts to which it gave rise, a dog, not far behind him, howled. It caused him to turn, and, with considerable surprise, he beheld a figure by his side. The apparition was so

sudden and unexpected, in that complete solitude and in the dead of night, that it almost wore the character of a supernatural visitation. The stranger was a stout, rough-looking man, with a bold, bad face, and a deformed, club nose. He was dressed in a kind of frock or gabardine, open in front, and bound with fur. The cuffs were bound with the same material. He had on a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat. His cheeks were sallow and sunken, and a long beard descended to his breast. By his costume Claude recognised one of those Polish Jews who are not unfrequently seen in the streets of Berlin.

The stranger regarded him for a moment with a fixedness which increased his astonishment.

"Who are you, and what do you want with me?" demanded Claude, in German.

"It is a mistake, sir; I looked for another person," said the Jew, in English.

"How! You speak English! You know me for an Englishman!" said Claude, more and more surprised.

The stranger, without answering, regarded him again from head to foot, and, suddenly turning away, disappeared in the shadows of the forest. Claude was at a loss to conjecture whether this incident was accidental, or whether it had any serious meaning. The man's demeanour was not that of a robber, but of one who had a desire to examine his features. There was something insidious in his manner; and his harsh and ugly face had an expression singular and discomposed. As his approach had been sudden and noiseless, so his retreat was abrupt. Was he a robber or an assassin? Had it been his design only to attack the careless passenger for the risk of such booty as he might chance to have about him? or had he intended to strike down some particular individual from a motive of revenge? and had he luckily discovered his

mistake in time to withhold the blow? These were serious questions; but, long ere he reached home, they were forgotten in the new thoughts and fears—for hopes there were none—of the fair young girl whose presence already made Berlin the hallowed spot of all the world to him.

CHAPTER XIV.

Claude to Mr. Denham.

“MY DEAR DENHAM,

“Your affectionate letter is received, and I sit down to answer it, half hesitating, notwithstanding the sincere friendship I entertain for you, whether I ought to comply with your wishes, and relate to you all the adventures of my life, and all the apprehensions which agitate my mind. You will not, even from this confession, doubt the sincerity of my sentiments; for you are, my dear Denham, the only man on earth whom I consider my *friend*. It is melancholy to reflect how few among all my acquaintance I place complete reliance on. Some who could, perhaps, appreciate the nature of true friendship, have their affections occupied elsewhere; and many, who exhibit a desire to become intimate, are not recommended by qualities which alone can make intimacy agreeable. Of the young men whom I have here associated much with, there is one in particular whom I have learned to esteem. Were we together for some years, I fear you would have a rival. But I am in this metropolis only for so short a time, and he is so much engaged with other avocations, that the interest we feel in each other will probably never grow beyond mutual wishes; for what would be the use of cultivating a connex-

ion, of which the short period could scarcely be more pleasant than the inevitable termination would be painful? I see in this young man, however, much which resembles you. He is naturally noble and superior, born amid all the advantages of prosperity, and spending his life in a sphere of fashion and pleasure, among men beneath him in intellect; and yet, while he equals and surpasses them in the elegant frivolities of fashion, he has the taste and resolution to cultivate his understanding, and the wisdom to reason with impartiality and truth upon subjects generally the least understood in such circles. To see him in the drawing-room, you would suppose him only the gay and light *homme du monde*; while in his study he is evidently fitting himself for a career of usefulness. This much in reply to your inquiry respecting 'new friends.' To your entreaty that I should leave off travelling and seek myself out a good wife, I have also something to say. I have many objections to marriage in my case. They are not those which generally influence men who remain bachelors. I have no prejudices against women, or apprehensions of the married state. On the contrary, I soberly believe no man can fulfil his duty, and enjoy all the happiness intended for him, without a family. The pleasures and affections—even the responsibilities, restraints, and cares which they produce, all tend to develop and balance his character, to enlarge his mind, and to keep his heart in a medium point of enjoyment most favourable to health, content, and honour. An old bachelor is almost sure to have some inaccurate notion or loose principle, which the reflection consequent on a family protects a husband and father from. No, my friend, do not suspect me of such flippant objections to matrimony; but there are others which I cannot easily overcome. You are aware of my general history, but I do not think I ever ventured to tell it to you distinctly, for it has been a subject not very agreeable for me to touch upon. I will

sketch it for you, however, and let you judge whether it does not offer me solid arguments against marrying.

“The earliest thing I can remember is a family where I was badly treated, in the West Indies. I was, at an early age, I scarce know how or why, taken from thence. I crossed the ocean, and was placed at an English school. I remained there till I was prepared for the University. All these measures concerning me were taken by invisible agents. I saw no one, knew no one, suspected no one. I became here acquainted with Lord Perceval, who was considerably my senior, and whose friendship has survived our school days. On leaving the University I received a letter. I have preserved it. It is in the keeping of Lord Perceval. The words are engraven on my memory. The writing was in an obviously disguised hand. It ran thus :

“ ‘It is time you should know sufficient of your history to keep you from inquiring more. You are the child of guilt. You have been cast off by one who for twenty years has kept a resolution, which will be inviolable, never to see you. Your existence is unknown to all but yourself and the writer of this, who, from a sense of duty, will not throw you utterly destitute upon the world, where all is false, and that most false which seems most fair. A yearly fund for your support, to the amount of £500, shall be deposited in the hands of the London bankers, N. B. & Co. You can draw it in half-yearly instalments in advance. It is paid you from one cause and on one condition. The cause is this : You are said to have conducted yourself thus far with rectitude and honour, and to be not unworthy a better fate than the dishonour which you inherit, and which, luckily for your peace, blackens only on your forehead without festering in your heart. The condition of this annuity is as follows : You are never to seek to ascertain your real name

and family. The first step you take with such a view will occasion the withdrawal of the sum; and your appropriation of it will be considered a pledge to that effect. Perhaps your pride may not readily accept a support under such circumstances. One who, however, has a right to command; who has educated you, and suffered for you, requests it. It will be continued for your life. It will then cease. Should you marry, it will be withheld. It is also desirable that you should pass the greater part of your time abroad. The strictest obedience will be exacted in respect to any search after your family; and you may the less reluctantly comply with this request, since, if you discovered all, you would only discover wretchedness, crime, and dishonour. May you be more happy and more virtuous than the wretches from whom you drew your being!

“ You will not be surprised that I can write this communication from memory. I have read it over so often; I have examined and weighed every word with such careful scrutiny, and repeated it so frequently to myself, that it is engraven on my mind, and I have exhausted all the conjectures to which it can give rise. Who are my parents? Am I the offspring of some unhappy mother, who writes this document, and who, perhaps, as a penance, denies herself the sight of the being whom she has brought into the world? or is it from the pen of a father, who has been betrayed by the object of his confidence? Is my family noble or low? From some intimations, I almost infer that they are outcasts from the laws of society, and have taken this method of saving me from the odium and fatality of being known to be their offspring. Perhaps they are robbers, perhaps murderers. Perhaps the money I spend is the tribute wrung from society at the hazard of life and soul. These conjectures, and a thousand others, cross me.

“ Thus adrift upon the world, I have, as you may imagine, never had much temptation to marry. I have even never had the wish, till now. And, to cap the climax of the events with which fortune clouds my life, who do you think is the person who has first made me feel a weakness which I have so often derided? One as far above my reach as a queen; one in a dazzling sphere of rank; surrounded by haughty friends, who would deem me a lunatic for thinking of her, and who actually throw me in her way with a stray carelessness, from the very impossibility, as they suppose, of my ever having the hardihood to regard her with warmer feelings than respect. She is, moreover, affianced to another; she has accepted him, and she loves him. Her father himself told me so. He is our countryman, Lord Elkington, whom you have probably heard of, though I never did before. Do not suspect me of the baseness of seeking to win this happy girl's affections. No; I linger near her from a deep fascination, of which I am heartily ashamed, and which I shall by-and-by break through, leaving her for ever, but bearing with me an impression which will hereafter close my heart to all other women. I linger near her, also, because I am welcomed by the family with a kindness for which I know not how to account. I have endeavoured to withdraw from their hospitality, but could not without exciting attention and awakening inquiry. Not only do they oppose no obstacle to my being frequently in her society, but it seems sometimes as if they took pains to bring us together. Had she been but the poor daughter of some husband-hunting mamma, and I a rich noble, I might find here something more than accident. But, alas! I see this perfect freedom arises from the very antithesis of a design to entrap. It is my insignificance; the distance between my position and hers, which exempts me from all guards and suspicion.”

CHAPTER XV.

THERE are few, even in the sanguine period of youth, who look forward to a promised pleasure with higher expectations than Mrs. Digby experienced at the near prospect of her at length approaching *début* in the world of real fashion. Not all the wealth which the family had inherited could procure her admission into those enchanted regions in England. The very contemplation of them, however, as they appeared recorded in the newspapers, had disordered her imagination, as it does that of many others, who might be so happy in the positions where Providence has placed them, but who, failing in the modest independence and wise content which render men respectable and dignified in any situation, abandon what they are, in vain attempts to appear what they are not, and can never be—fashionable people. Long before the event which had raised her from comparative poverty to opulence, the sparks of fashionable ambition had been lurking in her heart, and they were fanned by her good fortune into a flame which no reason could quench. Poor Digby, although a blockhead out of his own sphere, and totally without cultivation, had still the sense to regret the tranquillity of his former life, and only suffered himself to be drawn abroad and to be implicated in his wife's schemes from good nature. But she, imagining that all that was necessary to become a stylish woman was money and admission into stylish circles, overlooked the fact that, without the gentility which nature gives, or, at least, that acquired by an acquaintance with such scenes, a person is only the more conspicuously excluded from them by being in the midst of them. She thought, good soul, that, once within the saloons

of a palace, every obstacle would be surmounted, and her long-sighed-for triumph completely obtained. Her delight, therefore, was great, after having made the calls as suggested by Madame de Go-deau, and having received, in return for her own, the cards of all the nobility and gentry of the metropolis. She was honoured with an invitation to a—what she called "*deyjooney dangsang*," at Prince R.'s. She was now at the summit of her bliss. Carriage after carriage, for several days, had driven up and driven away, to shower upon her the cards of people whose dazzling titles made her head giddy with pleasure. So completely occupied was she with her grand design, that she paid no attention to the morning visits of Elkington, and the delight which the innocent and inexperienced Mary received in the attentions of that dangerous and bad man; and, if not blind to the fact that the blushes of her cheek were of a deeper hue than ordinary at the mention of his name, that the poor child bestowed double her usual care upon her toilet, and that she contrived to receive him often and long in the drawing-room, when no one but herself was ready to see him, she considered it as a token of her own success, and an omen of the brilliant prospects of Mary. In regard to expense, too, she became reckless. Her dresses were the most extravagant that could be procured. Her rooms were crowded with mantuamakers, *coutouriers*, *marchandes-de-modes*, *coiffeurs*, etc., etc., etc., and encumbered with furs, silks, bandboxes, and all the paraphernalia of a fine lady at the meridian of a fashionable season. In her own mind she believed that Mary's every-day increasing loveliness had ensnared the heart of Elkington, and a thousand visions, such as a weak and ignorant person in her situation might yield to, filled her fancy.

The *fête* given by Prince R. was to comprehend the royal family, as well as the nobility and gentry

of Berlin. The palace of the munificent host recalled in splendour the creations of Aladdin. The company assembled at twelve in the morning. The presentation to the royal family generally occupied the time till two or three o'clock, when a sumptuous dinner was followed by dancing and cards.

At the appointed hour Claude entered the lofty doors of the palace, amid armed horsemen stationed at short intervals in the street, crowds of splendidly-dressed ladies, and gentlemen in the richest uniforms covered with orders—no one appearing in the royal presence in a citizen's dress. Such as have no military, official, or diplomatic character, wore the quaint court costume still to be met in the similar scenes of the present day. All the faces which Claude had been accustomed to meet at the nightly *soirées* of the past several weeks, he found reassembled in these golden halls. Some of the fair votaries of pleasure, who spend their lives in the same round, losing a portion of their beauty by the sober light of day, showed by their faces that even pleasure is a wearing toil, while others were only more pure and lovely in the searching beams of the sun. The pomp and display everywhere around him; the throngs of domestics, all in rich, and some in very fanciful liveries; the large scale on which everything seemed built; the numerous suites of broad and lofty rooms, adorned with every variety of splendour, and filled with exquisite paintings and statues; the floors inlaid in the most exquisite manner; the glittering crowds; the military uniform of the officers, with their gay plumes and clanking swords, all formed a *coup d'œil* which threw even the elegant magnificence of Carolan far into the shade. As Claude entered, a din of gay voices was audible. Those already arrived were gathered in three or four large saloons, waiting the arrival of the royal family. So distant is the reunion of the society, that, notwithstanding the

short time he had spent in Berlin, he knew everybody. At every moment he was stopped as he advanced through the rooms. Many a hand welcomed him, and many a fair face greeted him with a smile. Lavalle, Beaufort, Thomson, and a score of other young men, in their smart diplomatic or court dresses, drew around him.

"How are you, Wyndham?" said Beaufort, with a yawn. "It's devilish hot here. These *déjeuners* are quite absurd."

"Well, I think them, on the contrary," said Claude, "very gay and pretty."

"Ah bah! you're so devilish amiable, there's no getting along with you."

"It is a very unfashionable fault," said Claude.

"Ah!" (a yawn), "I beg your pardon. What did you say? The fact is, it's such a horrid bore, being obliged to stand here eight or ten hours, that, really, I sha'n't get over it for a month. Why the devil don't people give suppers and have done with it?"

"My dear Mr. Wyndham!" said Thomson, with a great multiplicity of bows, "how are you? you don't look well; let me get you a glass of orgeat—now do, I entreat you."

Claude thanked him.

"Well! if you want anything to-day — if you wish to be presented to any one, lady or gentleman, or to any of the princes, mind and call me. At dinner-time I'll see that you have a good place, if you'll only let me know where you are. You'll have to be presented, too, won't you? I know all the *chambellans* intimately, and all the *grandes maitresses*. I'll look them up for you. I'll introduce you. It's very difficult, I assure you. Here, boy, bring the lemonade this way!"

Claude again thanked his officious friend, and with some difficulty disentangled himself from his polite offers.

"That fellow is perfectly in love with you," said Lavalle.

"He is very obliging, certainly," said Claude.

"He sounds your praises," said Lavalley, "wherever he goes."

"What kind of a person is he?"

Lavalley shrugged his shoulders.

"A butterfly that flutters around the newest flower, and will show his wings in your path as long as it lies through the sunshine. One puff of wind will blow him away instantly."

"And Beaufort?" said Claude.

"There was *once* good in him. He had feeling, if not sense, but it is merged in an insane desire to be considered a perfectly fashionable man. He has forgotten all standard of right or wrong but fashion. It is his morality. His whole character, mind, and heart are lost in it. To be *blasé* is his happiness; he sees no good in anything, no charm in nature, no beauty in virtue, no excellence in character, but what fashion points to. Of course, his understanding must be weak to permit of such a transformation; but his heart was good when I first knew him. Now I believe he has none. It is not fashionable; and I am sure, to become the object of notoriety in his circle, he is now capable of any alienation from right—of any unprincipled and cruel action. He piques himself upon ridiculing all that is high and noble, and in being totally callous to whatever ought to touch his feelings. He considers himself a perfect *homme du monde*. By-the-way, I see you are very much *lié* with the Carolans!"

"Yes."

"Take care there, my friend! It is dangerous ground. That girl is too pretty and amiable to be a *friend* to a person like you, without being something more; and yet, I observe, you seem much together."

"I do not think myself in serious danger," said Claude, though this chance remark of Lavalley's

made him tingle to his finger ends. "Besides, she is affianced."

"Yes, to that puppy Elkington."

"Puppy?"

"Most thoroughly. There isn't a man on earth whom I detest more. He is going to marry Ida with no more real affection for her than you have."

"Impossible!" said Claude.

"He can't appreciate her, in the first place. The match was made up by the families—and he has—now—actually fallen in love with another."

"What other?" said Claude.

"That pretty English girl, Mademoiselle Bigby—or Digby."

"Miss Mary Digby?"

"He is a man," said Lavalley, "not only capable of *doing* the basest action, but of boasting of it."

"What do you mean?"

"He boasts in his own set that this poor girl loves him. He is a frequent visiter at her home; and I have heard that she is so far his dupe as to have walked with him several times in the Park—alone. You are acquainted with them, I believe. It would be but right to put the family on their guard. They seem to be simple people. If I were the father of such a child, I would sooner see a viper in my house."

"I will tell him what you have heard," said Claude.

"But, for Heaven's sake, do so secretly," said Lavalley. "You know Elkington is a fatal shot."

"No," said Claude, "I will not do it secretly. I will inform myself better on the point, and, if I find it as you say, I will tell Digby the truth openly. I am no duellist. I have nothing to fear from him."

"That is to say, you would not *challenge*; but, were you to receive a message, you would go out, of course."

"No. It is one of those things which I have determined never to do."

"Well, you may be a very wise man," said Lavalle, after a moment's pause; "but all I can say is, that, if you venture to carry that principle into action, you stand the chance of being a very wise man in a very embarrassing situation."

"I regard a duel as an act of too great folly and crime ever to be engaged in one," said Claude.

"That it is, I grant," said Lavalle; "but the customs of society must be complied with."

"Granting that it is a crime, no custom can render it excusable."

"Yet declining a message may ruin a man for ever with the world, and, since we live in it—"

"When duty points a path," said Claude, "we have only to obey. The consequences I neither foresee nor trouble myself about."

"But the word *coward!*" said Lavalle; "the finger of scorn—the whisper—the taunt—"

"Clouds," said Claude, "which it is the business of an honest and brave man to walk through undismayed, and which will melt before his steady onward path, as vapours before the sun. A man of principle has an account between himself and God alone."

"Ah, this is very fine," said Lavalle, "but I fear—"

"Here is a partner wanted at whist!" said Thomson; "Wyndham, will you play? Lavalle, will you play?"

Both the young men declined.

"There's a useful person on these occasions," said Lavalle. "He knows everybody and everything that is going on in society. He can tell you more scandal in an hour than you would believe in a month. I recommend you to accept his offer of hunting up the *chambellans*. He is the very fellow for it. And, as you have to be presented to several

royal personages to-day, you have, I assure you, a task, in such a crowd by no means easy. Their royal highnesses are only to be caught in the intervals of the dance; and, when they are not dancing, the *chambellans* and *grand maitresses* very often are. I will aid you if I am near. Till then, adieu. I see I am beckoned to."

As Lavalley left him, Claude strolled around the rooms as well as he could for the crowd. He met the Carolans. Ida was not with them, but in a few moments he saw her in another room. She was surrounded by a crowd of ladies and several gentlemen, among whom was Elkington, earnestly speaking with her. Claude did not approach. He stood aloof, with a feeling of tenderness and melancholy which he had never experienced before. He regarded her at a distance, unseen himself. She appeared grave and sad. There was even a slight paleness upon her countenance.

"Alas!" thought he, as he stood motionless and gloomy, half withdrawn behind the pedestal of a golden vase; his gaze fixed upon her as on something sweet and lovely, lent a brief moment to his sight to be snatched from it for ever. "Alas!" he thought, "something has disturbed her. Would it were an evil that I could destroy—even with my life!"

He knew not that the shadow over this young girl had been cast there unconsciously by himself. Since the night when, obedient to the wishes of her parents, and little dreaming that there was anything in her own bosom which could rise up against her, she had pledged her hand to Lord Elkington, new thoughts and feelings had been born in her heart. It was the very next day that she met Claude at her father's table. There was something in his appearance which struck her attention. The surprise and lively pleasure visible in his countenance on their meeting, the cause of which was unknown to her, made him a subject of reflection. His conduct to

her, his coolness, subsiding into a tone of gentle courtesy, so different from the ordinary manner of the fashionable young men about her, fastened her thoughts still more upon him. The obvious jealousy of Lady Beverly and Elkington, who had observed the impression which he had made on her, rendered her still more observing; and several petty attempts to ridicule and injure him on the part of Elkington, raised the former as much as it depressed the latter in her esteem. In short, the inexplicable influence of a high and noble character had made upon her a new impression. The rudeness of Elkington at the opera, and the haughty, yet calm manner in which it was met, again placed the two persons in contrast to each other. It seemed that, since she sealed her fate by accepting the hand of Elkington, her eyes had, for the first time, opened to observation, her mind to reflection, and her heart to feeling. Placing no value on rank and wealth, since she had never known what it was to be without them, the inequality in the situation of Claude and herself did not enter her thoughts; nor, indeed, had she any more definite ideas concerning him, than that vague sentiment of admiration and interest which fills a young girl's heart on the threshold of womanhood, in the society of the man to whom she is about to surrender her affections. Claude presented to her in the real world a hero which she had believed existed only in imagination. She had given her hand to Elkington, supposing that she loved him; ignorant at once that her nature contained a deeper power of love, or the world a more worthy object. By that kind of caprice with which Fortune is apt to sport with human destinies, she began to experience a change in her feelings towards Elkington the moment it was too late, and to be, for the first time, conscious of that passion which has so much swayed the destinies of her sex. Thus situated in regard to each other, each began

to be cold and reserved in proportion as their hearts were in reality drawn nearer together. Each began to treat the other in a way which, without intending it, hid their feelings from the general eye, while it rendered them warmer and deeper. But this reserve, even when most conscientiously persevered in, could not always prevent their meeting at moments when neither had the desire, nor the power to act their assumed part; and all who have had occasion to observe the boy-god's peculiar talent for transacting a great deal of business in a short period of time, will comprehend what changes were produced in the hearts of these two young people during such brief and sweet interviews. Many a confidence never trusted to words, took place between them. Many an opinion was communicated not committed to the tongue. In short, they were just so far committed to each other, as to afford no real evidence that there existed a partiality between them, and to leave that fact also doubtful in many moods of their own minds.

It was in this state of mind that Claude met Ida at the *fête* of Prince R., and indulged himself with a long look at her beautiful face. Elkington was importunately pursuing her with a conversation in which she appeared to take no interest. Suddenly her eyes, as they wandered around the room, met his own. Her features were at once lighted with a smile of pleasure, and suffused with a faint colour, and she gave him one of those smiles which haunted his imagination, and sunk into his heart like poison. Elkington, who generally was too near-sighted to see Claude when at his side, now bent a keen glance on him. As he moved his eyes in another quarter, he perceived Lady Beverly peering at him through her glass. There was something of confusion in the manner in which he turned away, and, as if he were the object of some peculiar and mysterious scrutiny, he encountered the fixed gaze

of Madame Wharton. She looked graver than usual. There was reproof, and almost severity in her expression. He approached her.

"What does Mentor regard with such serious eyes?" said he.

"I fear," said Madame Wharton, coolly, "we are to be interrupted, for here comes his majesty."

At this moment the general clash of voices ceased suddenly, and was succeeded by a deep silence. An officer of the court entering with his *baton*, made a passage for the royal family. There was, however, little occasion for his exertions, for the crowd fell back on either side, leaving a wide space for his majesty Frederic William II., with the various members and guests of his family. The monarch advanced into the midst of the rooms, and Claude was presented by Lavallo to Prince —, the distinguished nobleman whose duty it was to name to royalty those who aspired to the honour of an interview. This ceremony was soon over, as well as those which etiquette rendered proper to the other illustrious personages. Having happily gone through these preliminaries, he was struck with the appearance of the Digbys. The good dame was magnificently arrayed in a brimstone-coloured, richly-embroidered satin dress, hat and feathers; a *toilet* somewhat conspicuous on any occasion, but unfortunately so on the present, since, the court being in mourning, it was the height of indecorum to appear in any other colour than black or white.

"Oh Dieu, madame," said Madame de Godeau, in an under tone, with consternation depicted in her countenance; "you are not dressed in mourning—when I tell you—mon Dieu—c'est épouvantable."

"You told me—mem," said Madame Digby. "You never told me."

"Yes, I told you the whole court were in mourning."

"Ah, certainly, mem; I recollect that, perfectly,

but I hadn't an idea you wanted *me* to go in mourning too. Why, I don't even know who's dead. I'm sure I have never seen the poor man in all my life!"

It was, however, now too late for any remedy, and she determined to carry it through. She therefore followed the *grande maîtresse*, who had obligingly waited till the end of her colloquy with Madame de Godeau, and, with her elbows well protruded from her ample body, made her way through the opposing multitude with little ceremony. Here and there Claude heard a nearly suppressed "*Ah diable, quel drole de figure!*" or, "*Dieu! qui est cette madame là!*" Mary was dressed in blue, but she looked so extremely pretty, that even they who laughed at were compelled to admire her.

Madame Digby, at length in good society—in the very centre of her much-talked-of *ho-tong*—stood in the presence of the princess with the air of one who intended to show the world that she was not to be intimidated. The distinguished lady to whom she was about to be presented seemed scarcely able to repress a smile, and the circle around were still less successful, at the awkward air and ridiculous affectation of the honest dame as she made her opening salutation. But royal affability on these occasions has no limit, and all in their presence are greeted with the courtesy which forms one of the ornaments of a throne. Half afraid of being encountered by one of Lady Beverly's haughty stares, Mrs. Digby was delighted to find the princess all smiles and blandness, and, recovering all her ambition with her ease, she cast a look around to assure herself that the whole assembly were witnesses of the honour she was enjoying.

"Have you been long in Berlin?" said her royal highness, in French.

An address in an unknown language would have abashed any one not blessed with considerable nerve;

but bounteous nature had left no such deficiency in the composition of Madame Digby. She only, therefore, approached a step or two nearer—much too close for the distance which more experienced courtiers have a care to leave between royalty and those in its presence—and, leaning her ear towards the face of the princess, she merely pronounced, in her own peculiar way, the word

“Mem?”

The princess repeated the question.

“I really beg your pardon, mem; but, if you could speak English with the same trouble, I should be more able to communicate with your ladyship, mem—that is—with your royal highness. Madame de Godeau informed me that you spoke English like a native, mem—your royal highness.”

“I hope you find Berlin agreeable!” said her august companion, in English, and with a good-natured smile.

“Well, mem, I can’t say but what I do.”

The princess began here another question, but Mrs. Digby interrupted her to add, “Your royal highness.”

“Are you pleasantly lodged?” inquired the princess.

“Why, mem, pretty fair, compared with where we were at Hamburg; but the stoves give Mr. Digby the headache, your royal highness!”

“We know you English never find on the Continent the comforts which you enjoy in your own country,” said the princess, politely.

“No, indeed, mem—your royal highness—that’s what we don’t; and as for—”

“Are you attached to any embassy?” inquired the princess.

“No, mem, not yet, but I believe we shall advertise for something of that sort; my relative, Lord Clew, was—”

She was cut short by a very affable courtesy on

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the part of the princess, and an exceedingly significant look from the *grande maîtresse* on one side, and Madame de Godeau on the other, intimating that her interview was over. She accordingly made a salutation, such as, in her mind, fitted the rank of the person she addressed, and her own character as a perfectly fine lady, who had at length arrived at the very summit of the *ho-tong*; and, ignorant of the conspicuous violation of etiquette of which she was guilty, she stepped away, turning her shoulder and back directly in the princess's face.

That lady not noticing, or not seeming to notice, the last manœuvre, turned towards Mary, who stood the next in the circle. The *grande maîtresse* led the trembling girl forward. Her timidity was so obvious, and she turned so pale, that the benevolent heart of the princess was interested in her behalf; and she addressed her so kindly, and led and sustained the conversation with so much consideration for her youthful and not ungraceful distress, that Mary found herself fully exempted from the necessity of making other remarks than her usual "yes" and "no."

The next object which attracted Claude's attention was Digby, the perspiration standing on his forehead, his face always rather rubicund from the vivifying effect of good English beef and beer, now heated beyond itself by the anxieties and horrors which, poor fellow, he had undergone in his attempts to be presented. Unacquainted with the faces of the royal personages, even when by their side, he sometimes ran against a prince, and sometimes made an inquiry of a princess. Some one whom he had never seen before was every moment wheeling him violently round with, "*Prenez garde! —sa majesté!*" or, "*Monsieur, la princess!*" At length, tired, terrified, and internally swearing that no one—not Mrs. Digby herself—should ever catch him again in a scene for which his habits of life

had so little fitted him, his knees aching, and his feet in a state of torment from the effect of a pair of high-heeled and very small new boots, which his wife had persuaded him to purchase for the occasion, he reached a broad crimson sofa, glittering with gold, and occupied on the other end by a lady and gentleman. Throwing himself down in an exhausted state, he muttered half aloud,

“Well, thank God! I’m here at last. Here sit I till dinner.”

Taking out a yellow silk pocket-handkerchief, he deliberately wiped the moisture from his forehead and blew his nose; and he had just finished taking a comfortable pinch of snuff, and was proceeding to offer the box to his neighbour, when he was struck with the intensity of astonishment with which a little military officer, with an enormous pair of mustaches, an exceedingly rich uniform, a multitude of orders, a high chapeau under his arm, and a long sword, fixed his eyes sternly upon him. In some surprise, not to say consternation, he hastily put up his handkerchief and snuff box, and looked around to see what he had done, when he perceived that several others—indeed, all the surrounding spectators—were regarding him attentively, and with visible tokens of amazement. Among others, a person half behind him, and partly withdrawn within the embrasure of a window, began to make him significant signs and violent gesticulations, and, at length leaning over, addressed him. The remark was lost, however, in a language which he did not understand. At length he came to the conclusion that he had torn his clothes, and, horrified at the idea, he proceeded to examine his elegant court suit, when his perplexity was terminated by Claude, who, perceiving his dilemma and the cause of it, approached him from behind and whispered,

“Get up. You are sitting with the prince and princess.”

If a bombshell had fallen at the poor fellow's feet, he could not have been more alarmed. He started up, and was darting off to hide his humiliation in some distant corner, but Claude with a strong hand very quietly withheld him.

"Good God! what now?" said Digby, afraid to move.

"You are running directly against the prince royal!"

"For Heaven's sake, then, let me go this way!" And, with a spring, he would have ran full tilt against another member of the royal family, had not Claude again checked his course. He remained, therefore, motionless, and resumed the task of wiping his forehead.

"Well, I say—Wyndham!" he muttered, "if *this* is Mrs. Digby's *ho-tong*—!"

The circle dispersed and Claude released his prisoner. It was not long before he observed him planted in a corner, with his back held resolutely against the wall, standing as straight as a grenadier under review, occasionally making a wry face at the pressure of his new boots, and now and then applying his handkerchief to his temples.

At length a general movement of the crowd announced the dinner-hour. The Digbys had succeeded in finding each other. The quick eyes of the long-talked-of *ho-tong*, skilful in detecting a stranger to the forms of good society, had already found in these honest people an object of attention, and their various mistakes were scrutinized and repeated. Many a keen jest and sarcastic comment were passed at their expense. Every young officer amused his *vis-à-vis* in the dance (which had long been going on in the ballroom) with an account of what he had seen and heard; and certain ladies, whose lives are spent in a round of fashionable pleasures, and to whom these golden halls are the world, showed little mercy to the new, awkward in-

truders. The three hours which intervened till the moment of dinner had so completely decided their fate, that, had they been infested with the plague, they could scarcely be more avoided. Mr. Digby, aware that he had committed divers blunders, perceived plainly enough that he was coolly cut by many persons with whom he had previously enjoyed a speaking acquaintance. They passed him, and jostled him, and peered with their glasses into his face and out again; spoke to each other under his nose and over his shoulder, without taking any more notice of him, his wife, or daughter, than if they had been actually invisible. He strove to catch the eye of several, but found it impossible. The honest fellow, who, to do him justice, was quite innocent even of a wish to mount into a sphere for which his education had not fitted him, blushed at the slights he received, and cast a look upon Mrs. Digby in her brimstone-coloured gown and hat, which threatened hereafter to bridle her genteel aspirations, and never again to allow himself or his daughter to be subjected to such an awkward ordeal.

Mrs. Digby herself was also becoming conscious that, although by management, aided by chance, one may push into such circles, they are more excluded while in the centre of them, by their different manners and education, than while quietly enjoying their natural sphere of society. She also had addressed several, and found herself unaccountably invisible, notwithstanding the numerous glasses which were from time to time directed towards her.

Everybody was now advancing to the dining-rooms. The Digbys had been borne by the current into the centre of the largest saloon, in which the king and the royal family were already seated at tables. Here, at a loss where to go or what to do, ignorant of the language in which alone they could communicate with the servants, they found them-

selves deserted by all and standing alone, exposed to the full gaze of the royal family and the highest persons of the court. Mary's face was crimson with terror, Mrs. Digby's with exertion and astonishment, and Digby's with honest indignation. In this extremity, which was really growing unpleasant, he resolved to apply to Lord Elkington as a countryman and a gentleman, and as one who had been very often lately at his house, and who, when alone with him, had honoured him with several condescending remarks. He saw him just then coming through the saloon, having just terminated a brief conversation with Prince R——.

"I find myself really obliged to ask your lordship—a—a—a—who—how—where—a—a—"

Elkington turned his glass into his face, and, as if not recollecting him at all, said,

"Pardon, monsieur;" and, pushing by, cast his eyes around as if in search of some one.

"I'll ask Lady Beverly," said Mrs. Digby, "where we are to go."

She advanced towards her, therefore, with an appealing look; but that lady drew herself up with a forbidding frown, which so frightened the poor woman that she had not a word to say.

At this moment Ida came in with Madame Wharton.

After their late rebuffs, the Digbys no longer dared to address any one else, and, entirely losing their presence of mind, as unable to withdraw as to retreat, and ready to sink into the beautiful floors, even Mrs. Digby began to regret the hour when she left her own circle of friends to make acquaintances with a rank of life so far above her own. At this moment Ida, who comprehended the awkwardness of their situation the moment she perceived them, stepped across the room, and, approaching Mrs. Digby, said,

"My dear madam, I fear you are at a loss for a

place. May I assist you? It is sometimes unpleasant here for strangers."

"Oh, mem," said Mrs. Digby, "we shall be so *very* much obliged to you if you will show us where to go."

"With great pleasure," said Ida. "I will tell a servant. I hope you are enjoying yourself to-day, Miss Digby."

"Oh yes, very much!" said Mary, emphatically.

A servant coming by, Ida said something to him in German. He bowed respectfully, and led the way towards the door, while Ida, after a few more kind words to them, resumed her place.

"That's an angel out of Heaven," said Mrs. Digby, "if ever there was one, and that hateful Lady Beverly—"

"And that scoundrel Elkington—" said Digby.

"But, mamma, which was the servant the Countess Ida gave us?"

"I did not look at him, I declare," said Mrs. Digby.

"And I was looking all the time at that beautiful girl," said Digby.

"You fool!" said Mrs. Digby, "what business have you to be looking at girls? now, you see, we're just as bad off as ever. I never *did* see such a *born* fool as you are, John, in my life."

"Oh, certainly, my dear; but who is the fool that's got us into this scrape?"

The crowd, which for a few moments filled the saloon, had now again disappeared, and they were left once more alone; all the tables which they could see in that, as well as the adjoining rooms, being full.

"Ah, thank God—there's Wyndham," said Digby, taking a long breath, like a soldier who, set on by numbers, at length sees a friend on whose prowess and fidelity he can depend. He advanced to Claude, but he also, at first, seemed affected with the general defect of vision which prevented everybody

else from seeing Digby's flaming physiognomy, although dripping under their noses. The eyes of our hero here were attracted to Ida and Madame Wharton, with one vacant seat by their side. He bowed, and the answering smile of Ida seemed to invite him to approach her, when the appealing voice of Digby arrested his attention. They explained to him their painful situation. All the company were now seated. In another minute they would have been in a yet more awkward dilemma than ever. Lady Beverly, who sat near, stopped from her soup to direct her glass towards the group, and said something which raised a laugh at the table where she sat. Claude longed to take the seat by Ida. It was, perhaps, the last hour of free intercourse with her which he should ever have the opportunity to enjoy. But had he a right, with such deep and now uncontrollable feelings, to seek the society of a young girl who, he already saw, was half aware of his madness, and was touched with it? The homely and awkward appearance, too, of the Digbys—for even Mary's expressionless face now looked vulgar contrasted with that of Ida.; the observation that all shrunk from them because they had rendered themselves ridiculous, and their obvious helplessness and dependance upon him, decided his generous nature to render them the assistance refused by everybody else. It was with an astonishment, of which the tokens were not wholly concealed from the object of it, that the surrounding circle saw Claude, who was among the most courted young men in the society, offer himself as the guide of the two ladies who were the subjects of such general derision, and, with an air of kindness and respect, lead them from the room. The broad stare and significant smile of Lady Beverly, and a rather loud remark from Elkington, which produced another laugh among the persons to whom it was addressed, neither intimidated nor embarrassed him, though he felt almost a pang on perceiving, as he left the room,

that Elkington had discovered the seat by Ida and taken possession of it. The smile had left her face. Was it his imagination, or had a sentiment of disappointment, of sadness, come over her countenance? As she bent her head to him in adieu, was there a shade of sorrow, of reproach? While reason disclaimed, his heart clung with a deep melancholy, with a yet deeper delight, to the wild and impossible, but still-recurring and ever-enchancing thought.

It was with some difficulty, and only on calling again the aid of a servant, that our party of strangers found at length vacant seats in one of the rooms down stairs. The kindness of Claude continued with the sumptuous dinner, and, aided by the succession of luxurious dishes and several glasses of Champagne, partly restored the Digbys to spirits. Not more than an hour and a half was spent at table, after which the company returned to the saloons, the cardrooms, and the ballroom.

In the course of the afternoon, Claude led Ida through a *contre-danse*, for which he had already engaged her. The last look she had exchanged with him had been one of confidence, of tender reproach, almost of love. To his astonishment, he now found her cold and distant. He could not meet her eye, and there was a striking change in her whole manner. Nowhere is such a withdrawal of kindly feelings more easily manifested and more clearly perceived than in the continual interchange of attentions during a dance. The lifeless hand, the fingers given only at the last instant, when the exigences of the moment demand, and withdrawn the instant they are over; the eyes, the face turned away; all this Claude perceived in his companion with pain and surprise. He was chilled. How much agony may be suffered in a dance, which seems the emblem of happy feelings! He was the more depressed as he felt that his short acquaintance

with Ida was nearly at an end ; that honour as well as prudence demanded him to fly, and he had no excuse for asking any explanation before he left for ever the side of one who was dearer to him than all things else but *duty*.

The dance was over. The candles were lighted. Ida turned away coldly and silently, without even looking on his face. He stood motionless, and forgot, and, indeed, had no opportunity to offer, those little marks of courtesy usual on such an occasion. The iciness of her manner communicated itself to his heart. A few moments afterward Elkington addressed her. Her face lighted up. She smiled again, gave him her hand kindly, and accompanied him to a new dance.

During this scene Madame Digby was sitting alone in one of the entering rooms, tolerably tired of her *ho-tong*. Mary danced several times with the young officers, of whom many spoke English. Digby had sought shelter at the card-table, where Claude, as he passed, saw his face redder even than it had been before, with the troubles of that elegant game, which, to a bad player, however, presents a recreation not greatly different from being broken on the wheel. Claude stopped a moment to observe the poor fellow. Misery makes us superpathetic, and he could not help pitying him. He was playing with Thomson against two Prussian generals who did not understand English. They were large men in magnificent uniforms, with full-sized mustaches, and that stolid expression of countenance with which your avowed whist-player follows alike the surprises, disappointments, and triumphs of the play. A long line of tricks was quietly gathered under the right elbow of one of these taciturn gentlemen, which was momentarily growing longer, while Thomson, whom a desperate desire for a few rubbers had driven to take Digby as a partner, was sitting with a dark frown upon his face, and exclaiming every instant,

"I don't understand your play at all!—What the devil did you play that for? and, How—you put your ace on my king?"

The party presently finished. Digby, of course, had lost. Their adversaries had made "*grand slam*;" and the poor fellow found that, in addition to having been browbeaten and bullied by Thomson, and to having sustained several threatening glances when the rotation of the game made him the partner of one of the strangers, he had lost fifty Louis.

"Well, thank Heaven! this is over at last," said Digby in a whisper to his wife, as he found himself waiting on the stairs for the carriage, amid about three hundred people, who had the precedence of him; and, knocking his hat down emphatically on his head, "If ever you catch *me—a—a—in*—"

He was interrupted by a cane with a large gold head, which obtruded itself unceremoniously under his arm, and pushed him gently and firmly aside, with his face against the wall. A stranger very politely took him by the shoulder, and whispering with an intense anxiety, "*Madame la Princesse B—*," wheeled him round with his face to the front.

"Monsieur," cried an officer of the court, addressing to him a few rapid and angry words, which he could not understand; but, by the eyes of the speaker being fixed on the top of his head, he comprehended at length that he was to take off his hat, which he did. The princess, with her *chambellan* and *maids of honour*, now advanced, bestowing on all around the most affable smiles. The company stood close with their backs against the wall, and bowed respectfully. A little general, in his profound reverence and violent salutation, planted a foot nearly as large as himself upon Digby's instep, already nearly in a state of mortification from the effects of standing all day in too tight boots. The good man's lips were seen to move, and a peculiar expression passed over his countenance; but his

voice was not heard, and the precise tenour of the remark which he made upon the occasion must be left to the imagination of the reader.

The princess was immediately followed by the Carolans. Ida bowed politely as she passed, their servant making way for them to their carriage through the crowd of company and of footmen who filled the hall, waiting with their masters' and mistress's hats and cloaks. As they passed, Mrs. Digby exclaimed,

“Why, where on *airth* is Mary?”

It was true. Mary was gone. The moment before she had been at their side; she could not possibly have advanced towards the door, and must, therefore, have retreated. Astonished and vexed, Digby was just hastening back, when one of the princes appeared, and a stranger grasping his arm firmly to prevent his proceeding, he was obliged to remain standing where he was for about ten minutes, till his royal highness, having finished a conversation with an officer, passed out. He had no sooner done so than Digby forced his way back through the crowd till he again reached the rooms. He traversed the now deserted saloons with a hasty step, and fairly lost himself, so that he was unable for some time to find the way to go, or the door by which he had entered. At length, in a large apartment, he saw a portion of the company waiting till their carriages should be announced. Passing through this into an adjoining room, he found himself in a small but beautiful saloon, crowded with vases, paintings, statues, tall plants, and flowers. He saw no one there, and was about leaving it again, when a low voice caught his ear, and drew his attention to a deep recess, where, nearly concealed behind a trellis of thick vines, so arranged as to form a kind of bower, he caught a glimpse of figures. Advancing without ado, he came suddenly upon them. The first object which struck his eye

was Mary. A gentleman was before her, holding her hand, which he covered with kisses. At the exclamation of the astonished father, he turned, and disclosed the features of Elkington.

Digby knew that Lord Elkington was the affianced husband of the Countess Ida. He remembered his mean and rude conduct to himself and family a few hours before; a thousand circumstances connected with his visits to his home now rose suddenly in his mind, and, already goaded to a state of desperation by the mishaps of the day, he felt that his last drop of patience was exhausted. Advancing to him, with rage and vengeance depicted in his countenance, he said,

“My lord, you will not be surprised if, discovering you in such a—a—a—position—in—a—a—with my daughter, I—a—ask—I—request—a—a—I demand of your lordship what are your—your—your—intentions respecting—connected with—a—concerning her.”

Elkington saw in a moment that he was in a dilemma, which might be injurious to him if it should meet the ears of the Carolans; but, with the perfect effrontery of one accustomed to similar contingencies, and who knows himself possessed of a short and sure, as well as a safe way out of them, he said,

“My good fellow—really—I positively don’t understand you. My charming young friend will assure you that this is a mere jest—a trifle. I should have conducted her to her carriage in another minute.”

“Sir,” said Digby, “you’ll find me—a—a—not a person to be trifled with.”

“Upon my word, I have no desire to trifle with you,” replied Elkington, laughing. “Your lovely daughter is such a very agreeable substitute. I believe, frankly, you have caught me rather off my guard; but what can a man do? If you will bring

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such an enchanting creature into society, you must expect her to turn our heads. Come, it is quite absurd, I assure you. I will call in the morning, and explain all; I will, positively!"

"My lord, you are a villain!" said Digby.

"How is that?" said Elkington, coolly, but losing his affected mirth. "I make some allowance for your temper and education, sir, but that is a word which you must unsay."

"I say you are a villain!" said Digby; "and, if we were not under a—a—roof—where—a—propriety restrains me, I would—whip you, sir—for your insolence—and your dishonourable—a—conduct to my daughter. I shall, however, write to Count Carolan a statement of this affair, and warn him that he is about admitting into his family a scoundrel in great points, as well as—a—a—puppy—my lord—in small ones. Then, sir, there is my card; you can send whenever you please, but I will admit *you* no more across—a—a—my threshold. You are a thoroughbred—a—a—puppy—a—a—a—puppy, my lord. Come with me, miss."

Elkington advanced to within a single step of his enraged adversary. He had very seldom, if ever, been spoken to so plainly. The only instance—and it was a case similar to the present—when an indignant father had thus poured out his wrath for an insult offered to him through his daughter, he had challenged him, and shot him through the heart before the expiration of twelve hours after the offence.

"My good friend," said he, in a low voice, so that Mary could not hear, "you are aware that this is not a place for an affair of this sort. By giving your card, I presume you mean to say you are ready to offer me the satisfaction of a gentleman. If you have any claims to be one, you will speak of it to no one, and you shall hear from me in the course of the evening."

“Yes, sir—a—a—as soon as you please. Any satisfaction you desire is—a—a—at your disposal; and permit me to add, my lord, that the sooner it is—a—a—a—demanded, the sooner it will be—a—a—given.”

“Well,” said Elkington, “we understand each other, then. I wish you a good-evening. Good-night, my love,” and he left the room, twirling his glove with an indifferent air.

Mary had thrown herself on the sofa, and covered her face with her handkerchief, so that she did not fully know what had taken place. Digby drew her arm in his and hastened to the door, where he found Mrs. Digby in a fury on account of his long absence. She was, however, a little gratified to perceive a large crowd of miscellaneous subjects collected in the street before the palace, and to become, for an instant, the object of their fixed gaze and half-whispered admiration. As she stepped into her carriage, she felt that *they* at least took her for somebody, and that her peculiarly conspicuous toilet had here all its desired effect.

Claude left these splendid halls with a heart as heavy as poor Digby's. He felt that, from some sudden cause, the half-woven tie of sympathy and love, which had bound him to Ida, was rudely broken. He was even willing that it should be so for ever. What was it which had thus changed her?

As he got into his carriage he saw once more the young man, Mr. Rossi, whom he had seen in the pit of the opera and at the picture-shop. He was paler than usual. With his faded clothes and melancholy air, he looked poverty-stricken and diseased.

CHAPTER XVI.

DIGBY had scarcely got home, exhausted, hot, nervous, hardly able to breathe in his new clothes, which were too small for him, and completely mortified and depressed by the events of the day—his tight boots, not without difficulty, at length abstracted from his swollen and inflamed feet, and displaced by a pair of comfortable slippers, and his court suit exchanged for a loose *robe de chambre*—when Peter announced, with a respectful bow, “My Lord Beaufort.”

“My Lord Beaufort!” said Digby, turning pale.

“Why, what on earth can he want?” said Mrs. Digby.

“Show him in,” said Digby, his head spinning round like a top, and not distinctly knowing what he had to expect.

Lord Beaufort came in. He had changed his military court uniform for his usual dress, and he entered with a cool and composed air.

“How are you, ladies? How are you, Mr. Digby? You’ve got home, I see.”

“Yes, my lord!” said Mrs. Digby.

“Thank God!” added Digby.

“I hope you have enjoyed yourself, madam?”

“Oh, excessively; it was quite charming, my lord,” said Mrs. Digby, feeling it as some remuneration for her sufferings that she was, at least, fairly in society with kings and princes, and lords and countesses.

“You have not fatigued yourself dancing, I hope, Miss Digby?”

“Oh no, sir.”

“You’re very fortunate. I think that sort of thing insufferable myself. They’re horrid bores. The

ladies frightful, with a few exceptions." He intended this for a compliment, and marked his meaning with a smile to his fair companions, who both bowed, particularly Mrs. Digby.

"Oh, my lord, you're so polite. It's quite charming!" said Mrs. Digby.

"I positively don't get over one of these nuisances in a week. I can stand anything but a breakfast. Dinners, suppers, balls, soirées—we bear these—they are natural—we are accustomed to them—but—"

"Your lordship don't like the *dejooney-dangsang*, then?" said Mrs. Digby.

"Not at all, I assure you."

"Well, that's the only sensible thing I've heard you say yet!" said Digby, bluntly.

"Ha! capital!" said Beaufort. "By-the-way, Mr. Digby, I have a request to beg of you. May I speak with you a moment? I will not detain you long."

"Is there a fire in the study?" asked Mrs. Digby; for she dignified a little room, where they kept the guide-book and the French grammar, with that name.

"No, mamma," said Mary.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what—"

"Well, *what*?" asked Digby, feeling it necessary to say something.

"Mary and I will retire into our dressing-rooms. Mary, ring for Peter. Peter, call the maids. Miss Digby and myself wishes to change our *toylettes*. Don't decompose yourself, my lord, on my account."

"No, I won't!" said Beaufort.

"Mary, my love—good-morning, my lord—by-by, Digby." And, with an affected air before the handsome young lord, who, she presumed, had very likely called after Mary—perhaps to make a proposal—and upon whom she wished to leave an impression as a "*personne distinguée*," she sailed out of the room.

"A little trifle, I believe, has occurred between you and my friend Elkington, which he has requested me to arrange."

"Your friend Elkington is an infamous scoundrel," said Digby; "an—a—a contemptible—a—a—unprincipled—cowardly—a—a—a—puppy—a—a—a—puppy, my lord."

Beaufort tapped his foot with his rattan.

"I say, my lord, your friend is a rascal; a—a—very great scoundrel; and the most infernal puppy I ever saw."

"Don't let me interrupt you, I beg," said Beaufort; "but, when you have sufficiently amused yourself calling him names, perhaps you will receive his message?"

"His message!" said Digby, opening his eyes; for, so rapid had been the events of the day; so sudden the discovery of a person at the feet of his daughter, whom he knew he could not marry; so great his indignation, and so obtuse his intellect, that he had not, until this moment, distinctly conceived what the whole was to lead to. He repeated again, in a lower tone,

"His message!"

"Yes; allow me to hand it to you."

Digby took it, and read:

"SIR:

"The circumstances under which we last parted leave me only the alternative to beg you to name a friend to arrange the terms of a meeting at your earliest convenience.

"Your obedient servant,

"ELKINGTON.

"*Mr. Digby.*"

"Why, this is—a—a—certainly—my lord—a—are you aware—how this—a—a—of the circumstances of the—a—a—that is—how this affair—a—a—sprung up?"

“Who! I? Certainly not. I only deliver my friend’s message.”

“But do you know, sir,” said Digby, with feeling, “that I—I—I am a father—a husband—and a father, my lord?”

“I certainly had not given the subject particular reflection; but, from the appearance of the lady called Madam Digby, and also the very pretty young girl who is inscribed on her card as ‘*sa fille*,’ I am induced to think you are.”

“Well, sir—that is, my lord,” said Digby, “I have only to tell you that I did not call your *friend* a rascal till he had proved himself one; not till being, in fact, all but—a—a—a—married to another lady—I—found—I perceived—a—a—I detected him—a—a—my lord, making—a—a—a—love—to my daughter.”

“You may detect a gentleman in what you please,” said Beaufort, in a tone of very condescending explanation; “but you really ought to be aware that you must not call him a *villain*. That is a term to be answered only in one way.”

“One?”

“Unquestionably!” said Beaufort, laughing; “you seem to be strangely unacquainted with the usages of good society.”

“But, my lord, I don’t wish to give my Lord El kington the pleasure of that ‘one way.’ Sir, I’ve just stepped into a fortune of £100,000 sterling, and I wish to enjoy myself a little. I am going to travel. I’m going to educate my daughter—to educate—to protect her—to settle her in life. What will Mrs. Digby do without me? Why, d—n it, sir, she’d make a greater fool of herself than she has done already. What would Mary do without me? She—an innocent, perfectly inexperienced girl, whom, even when I’m alive, I can scarcely take care of; whose beauty—and simplicity—and—a—a—helplessness of character, my lord—expose to the duplicity

of every scoundrel like your friend, my lord—what's *she* to do when I'm dead? Her mother—so far from being a protector, sir—would be the very one to lead her into danger—into ruin—for, let me tell you, my lord, that Mrs. Digby is a very weak woman, as, it's my opinion, all the rest of them are."

"I have heard you very patiently, I'm sure," said Beaufort. "And, for the confidence you have been so obliging as to repose in me upon the subject of your family affairs and prospects, and your opinion of the female sex in general, and of Mrs. Digby in particular, I must return you my grateful thanks; but what I am here definitely for is to deliver to you this note, and to request you to have the affair over as soon as possible. Couldn't you arrange matters this evening, and have it settled at day-break?"

"If I'm to be shot," said Digby, sullenly, "because I took my own daughter from the hands of a scoundrel, I perfectly agree that the sooner it's done the better."

"Will you name a friend, then?"

"I haven't a friend in this infernal country, except, indeed, Mr. Wyndham."

"The very man! send him to me. I shall be at my rooms for an hour. We shall be ready to-morrow. Adieu!"

And, humming an air from the last new opera, he took his leave.

Digby sat a few moments confounded. However stupid in general matters, he had some feeling, too, upon things connected with his own affairs, and his heart swelled with anguish and indignation at the unprincipled conduct of Elkington to Mary, and his brutal intentions towards himself. His brain swam at the idea of being upon the threshold of the grave. It stunned him, and yet gave to his demeanour a serious and even dignified air. He was now, for almost the first time in his life, in danger; and

he felt within his breast all the affection of a father, all the indignation of a man trampled on, and all the weakness of one unprepared to die, either in his mind or in his temporal affairs. He had never touched a pistol in his life, and he knew that Elkington was an avowed duellist and a deadly shot. Had he not known perfectly that he had *no* chance, in case of a meeting, of saving his life, his wrath was so great at the whole proceeding, that he would have gone out, even with pleasure, and committed the result to hazard. He had no *moral* scruples, no religious objections. He viewed his situation merely as it regarded his interest and that of his family; and he saw that, while to Elkington the transaction was but one of twenty similar ones, for which he was, by his principles and practice, always ready, which brought him comparatively no danger, and which, even if it should terminate fatally to him, would leave him in his last moment no regret but that of a selfish nature—no helpless wife—no daughter exposed, without defence, to the ~~greatest~~ dangers which can threaten youth and beauty. Not only was the transaction to him certain death, but it would bring on a train of consequences, whose dark nature and vague extent were drawn in terrible perspective by imagination.

Bitterly deploring his wife's folly in dragging him into circles of society infested with such vices and by such customs, with a trembling hand and a sinking heart he rang for the servant, ordered Mr. Wyndham to be sent for immediately, and requested his daughter to be called into "the study" alone. The poor girl appeared in a few moments. A faint suspicion of what was going on had entered her mind, and, at the sight of her father's pale face and gloomy expression, so different from its usual gayety, she felt that her fears were just.

"Come here, Mary," said he. "Come here, my daughter."

He drew her to him, and, passing his arm round her waist, kissed her twice. It seemed that she had apprehended a harsher reception; for at these tokens of kindness the tears rose to her eyes, and, throwing her arms around his neck, she said,

“My dear, *dear* father.”

“Have you said anything to your mother—about—about—”

“Yes, sir; I have told her all. Indeed, she knew it before.”

“Knew it before! why, what was there before?”

“Lord Elkington’s passion for me.”

“Passion? Your mother—knew—”

“All, my dear father.”

“And has Lord Elkington dared—”

“Oh, sir, he is sincere and noble; indeed, indeed, he is. He is one of the kindest, the best of men. He is all goodness, all condescension, all purity.”

“And do you know that Lord Elkington is actually engaged to another lady?”

“A match of interest—made up by his mother—in which, he has assured me, his heart is not in the least concerned, and which, since he has seen me, he is almost determined to break off; mamma says she’s sure he will.”

“And you, Mary,” said Digby, in a lower voice, trembling with rage, “have you been so—a—a—so silly—as to believe—as to—allow your—your—your—a—a—feelings to become interested in this man?”

“Oh, sir—he—I—that is, mamma—”

She burst into tears, and hid her face in his bosom.

“The villain! The infernal profligate!” muttered Digby.

“No, no, my father—”

“Yes—I *will* teach him—I will—”

But, ere he had completed his threat, all the absurdity of attempting to teach him the desired lesson by a duel rose to his mind. To-morrow, he

reflected, at this hour, he might be a bloody corpse. Who then would lead this simple-hearted girl through the snares laid for her? Here, in a foreign country, with only her mother, who was less wise, if possible, than herself. He actually trembled at the thought, and, for a moment, forgot his own danger in apprehension concerning his daughter.

"Hear me, Mary—and the time may come when you will remember my words, and when the only mark of affection you can show me will be to follow their counsel—Lord Elkington is an unprincipled scoundrel. He has no idea of marrying you."

"He swore to me that he loved me—and only me," said Mary, sobbing,

"He is a liar and a scoundrel!" said Digby; "and I forbid your ever having anything to do with him. Mark me! I lay my command on you. If ever you speak to him again when you can possibly avoid it, I shall consider you as a disobedient and guilty child; and the curse of your father—whom your imprudence, perhaps, will consign to the grave—is all I leave you. I will have no Elkington in my house—I—I—a—a you—why, what's the matter, Mary?"

The form of the poor girl, which lay on his bosom, pressed more and more heavily upon him, till he perceived her slipping to the floor, upon which she would have fallen had he not suddenly caught her in his arms. She had fainted. He rang the bell. Peter came to his call, and announced Mr. Wyndham, who entered immediately. He started on seeing the haggard and excited face of Digby, and the state of insensibility of his daughter.

"What is it? what is the matter?" he exclaimed, in a tone of true sympathy, which touched the heart of Digby.

"I am a ruined man!" said Digby; and he laid down his forehead upon the table, and hid his face during a moment of uncontrollable agitation. Mrs. Digby and two maids came running in at the confusion.

"Take her, madam," said Digby, "and see the result of your fine fashionable plans."

"Good God, John! what is the matter—and what has the fool been about?"

"Leave the room, madam," said Digby, with a real dignity which he had never discovered before, but which strong emotion sometimes arouses in the plainest character. "Take your daughter where you can recover her, and leave me."

"Why, do *you* think," said Mrs. Digby, "that I'm a going to—"

"Your daughter, madam, is dying perhaps, while you dispute your husband's orders; go, this instant, or I will never see you more."

The good dame, thunderstruck at the tone of authority in which he spoke, and awed by a something of determination in his manner which she had never seen before, turned pale and obeyed. When she was gone, Digby locked and double locked the door; returned, fumbled a moment in his pockets, turned pale as death, and, throwing down Elkington's note upon the table, said,

"Read that letter, Mr. Wyndham."

Claude opened and quietly perused it.

Digby then related the circumstances which had led to it. When he had finished, Claude said,

"Well, and what of it?"

"What of it?" said Digby. "Mr. Wyndham—sir—do you—a—a—inquire what of it—when I'm a—a—going to—to—to—be shot, in about twelve hours' time, through the head—and—a—a—with—a—a—like a wild duck—do you sit there and ask what of it? Upon my word—upon my honour—this is the worst of all."

"What is worst of all?" said Claude, calmly.

"Why—your unfeeling, singular answer—a—a—and altogether—a—a—very unaccountable remark. What of it? What of it, indeed! Why, to such a friend as you, nothing perhaps; but, if *you*

were called out to meet such a—a—a—infamous—
bloodthirsty ruffian and avowed cutthroat as this
—a—fellow—there would be, I presume, sir—a—a
—*good deal* of it.”

“No there wouldn’t,” said Claude, with the utmost composure, “because *I* would not meet any man in a duel. I am not a married man myself, but—”

“For which you ought to thank God!” said Digby.

“Nor have I any one dependant on me for support and protection; yet even *I* will never—never meet a fellow-creature in a duel. It is a folly so gross, a cruelty to others so unfeeling, a remedy so inadequate, and a crime against man and God so obvious and so solemn, that no circumstance, however tempting, should make me commit it any more than I would rob a traveller on the highway, or murder an enemy in his bed.”

You—don’t—a—a—advise me—to—a—a—*refuse* this challenge!” said Digby.

“I do, most positively.”

“I was going to ask your services as a friend.”

“To decline it, I will render them; to conduct any such negotiation with the alternative of a meeting and a death—never!”

“But he will horsewhip me.”

“That would be unpleasant, and, if possible, I would prevent it.”

“I will carry pistols.”

“No, I would not.”

“What, would you be horsewhipped?”

“Rather than commit a murder, or rather, particularly in your case, than be killed, and leave my family in such a defenceless state as yours would be. Perhaps I could not better choose the moment to inform you what I heard this morning of Lord Elkington and your daughter. He boasts openly of having acquired her confidence among the young men of the town, and has even so far worked upon

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her inexperience, by his promises and fascinations, as to persuade her into several walks with him."

"I will meet him," said Digby, his face inflamed with rage. "I know not what may be the result—I will meet him."

"But I can tell you the result," said Claude, quietly.

"You can?"

"He will kill you, and he will consider your death as an event of boasting and self-congratulation. Your daughter would be left then without a protector. You have—let me speak plainly to you, my friend—you have left your own circle of society to come into one where, unfortunately, a father may behold his daughter torn from him at midday, and be shot in attempting to defend her, without the law's taking any real notice of the crime; and you have brought this beautiful young child among men who deem it no dishonour to ruin her happiness and character, so long as they are ready to expose their lives in defence of their guilt."

"But if I refuse, what will everybody say? I will be posted everywhere—I shall—be disgraced and hissed at—as a—a—a—coward—and, moreover, if he attacks me in the street—but I will carry loaded pistols with me—and—"

The perspiration stood in large drops upon his forehead as these alternatives succeeded each other in his mind.

"Mr. Digby," said Claude, "take my advice. I have thought more upon this subject, I suspect, than you. Duelling is not right in the eyes of God; it is against the law, against reason, against the rights and happiness of women. Your wife—your daughter—you cannot expose them to such a stroke without cruelty, selfishness, and real dishonour. Proceed no farther in this matter. Break it off altogether. If you are a man of sense as well as a Christian, you will see that your presence is urgent—"

ly required here to take care of your family. If you are brave enough to die to save your name from an unjust and absurd aspersion, you have not the *right* to do so."

"But—I have given him my card—I have told him I would grant him any satisfaction—after this—can I retreat? can I withdraw? can I bear the—the—a—a—eye of the world? Won't the very—a—boys hoot at me as I pass along?"

"What the boys or the world may do is not your affair. I will have nothing to do with a duel. You must seek some other friend!"

"Let me ask you one thing; upon your honour as a gentleman, would you, in my place, refuse to fight?"

"Upon my honour, I would."

"And dare you assure me that you never will either send or accept a challenge, under no matter what circumstances?"

"I do, most solemnly."

"And do you, as a friend, tell me that you suppose there are other persons—respectable, good men—who believe as you do upon the subject of duelling, and who would not call a man a coward because he refused to fight?"

"I do. I am certain there are many such. All who are truly Christians on the globe will praise you for it. All who have correct moral feelings will support you in it. All women will bless you for adding your influence to put out of fashion this bloody, senseless, and terrible custom."

"Will you carry my refusal to Lord Beaufort? He is waiting for you at his lodgings."

"I will. And I shall esteem myself too happy in being instrumental in preventing such a painful occurrence. Go, my friend, go back to your family. Continue their protector, their guide. The young girl who has unhappily occasioned this disagreement is, among such men as Elkington, sur-

rounded by dangers from which a father's watchfulness can only preserve her. Let no false sense of honour cause you to desert the post where Providence has placed you ; and, for the good opinion of men whom you despise, do not alike violate the dictates of sense, nature, and religion."

"I will carry arms, though!" said Digby.

"No. Carry no weapon, not even a cane. Walk freely abroad, with no other shield than the moral influence of a good father and an honest man."

"And if Elkington should strike me?"

"He will commit a crime against the law, for which I would no more be ashamed to go to the law for redress, than I would against any other act of fraud or ruffianism."

"Write me a reply, then."

Claude sat down and wrote :

"SIR :

"This afternoon, when I found you soliciting from my daughter promises of attachment incompatible with your relations with the Countess Ida Carolan, I used language which, if you did not deserve, the provocation must sufficiently excuse, without other apology from me. If, in anything which I said, you found an acquiescence in your suggestion as to a meeting, I must beg you to consider that I spoke in a state of mind when a just passion predominated over calm reason. Upon reflection, I find that my sense of duty to my family and to my Creator will not permit me to proceed farther in a course, where I can see no possibility of gaining advantage or honour, either in this world or in the next. I decline giving you the meeting you desire, and, at the same time, I forbid your future visits to my house. If I have offered you any disrespect, it is more than counterbalanced by the insult I have suffered at your hands ; and, in permitting the affair to drop where it is, I do so, my lord, not without sacrificing

some of the feelings of a man to the duties of a citizen, a father, a husband, and a Christian.

“I am your obedient servant,

“JOHN DIGBY.”

CHAPTER XVII.

It is to be hoped that the reader has had few opportunities to observe the heart of a libertine, when brought up in an opulence which offers the gratification of every wish, and without the restraining influence of principle or religious belief. His life spent in one unceasing round of vices, following every pleasure to its end, and with most zeal when most forbidden; indulging all his passions, never replenishing his mind with reading or instructive conversation, or purifying it by calm self-examination and wholesome reflection, he becomes at last totally selfish and depraved. Perhaps no characters could be more strikingly contrasted than those of the two young men now about to come into contact. The one was as completely base as the other was noble and disinterested. The one was destitute of all moral sense; the other would have died rather than commit a wrong action.

Elkington was in every way Claude's antithesis, and, in painting a character so abandoned, we should fear the charge of exaggeration, did not history and the less extended annals of private life furnish too many examples. It is becoming a fashion in modern novels to mingle the good and bad so ingeniously in the characters of scoundrels, that one scarcely knows whether they are objects of censure or admiration; and Lady Macbeth has become the original of a race of villains, who commit crimes by

fortuitous coincidences and with amiable reluctance. Experience has not led us to think that such examples in the portraiture of character are to be too implicitly followed. Unfortunately for human nature, there are, and always will be, men who, if tried, will be found utterly wanting; whose profligacy never stops while it has power to proceed; and whose very virtues only serve to render them more inexcusable and disgusting. Elkington was one of these—a libertine, a gambler, a duellist. He plunged into every temptation, without a thought of right or wrong. Ida had fewer attractions for him than the less intellectual beauty of Mary Digby; and, as far as such a person could be inspired with love, he entertained it for that beautiful but simple girl. The facility with which he impressed her heart encouraged him to proceed, while the difficulties in his path gave zest to the game, and furnished a sort of pleasing excitement.

The answer of Digby to his challenge opened a new field to his passions. Claude Wyndham was the bearer of it, and he hated him with all his heart; and, from some yet unexplained cause, his mother, since their first meeting, had never ceased to speak of him with contempt and hatred, and to call her son's attention to everything which could cause him to participate in her sentiments; of this the chief cause was his standing with the Carolans, and his visible progress in the good opinion of Ida. Several circumstances, which had made Elkington suspect Claude had placed Digby on his guard touching his visits to Mary, would, without other grounds, have awakened the resentment of a heart familiar with plans of death. He had also reason to know that the note from Digby, declining his challenge, was written by Claude. From that moment he resolved to fix the quarrel upon Claude, and to pursue it to an extremity. No principle or religion checked his bad passions. He wanted a rival out of the

way. He desired the destruction of a man, whose unbending rectitude rebuked his profligacy by its contrast, and whose fearless chivalry of character did not hesitate to thwart his unholy plans. The custom of duelling, sanctioned by the opinion of many, although denounced by the law, literature, taste, and religion of the age, offered a safe and sure means of executing his scheme. It is such men as he alone who are interested in preserving this bloody custom from the odium it merits. The honest man requires no such remedy. His life is the witness of his courage and honour; and the insults of the rash, or the wrongs and slanders of the wicked, pass from before his name, like clouds from the ever-unstained and stainless moon.

Claude knew Elkington was base and malignant. He saw he hated him, and in his own breast a secret and strange dislike had risen with a strength which he could not wholly repress. It had been his wish to avoid any association with him. He regarded him as a dark and dangerous man, ready for any deed of open violence or secret fraud. Several things of which Lavalley had informed him, added to his own observations, enabled him to read his character correctly. It was, therefore, not without reluctance that he agreed to become the bearer of a message which might place him in collision with a person whom, from various considerations, he so much wished to avoid. But the idea that he might prevent a bloody catastrophe, that he might save Digby and Mary from the snares of a murderer and a libertine, induced him to forego his own desires. He had, as Elkington suspected, long since put Digby on his guard concerning his visits to his house; and it was from a generous impulse to defend the weak and to take part with the innocent, that he had given his counsel, written the letter, and borne it to Beaufort.

Claude saw Digby the next morning. The hon-

est fellow had received another visit from Beaufort of a conciliatory nature. Elkington begged to assure him that, if his principles did not permit him to adopt that mode of arranging a dispute, he would not press it upon him, and that, on condition of a mutual forgiveness, he would let the affair drop. But, should he ever relate their disagreement or the cause of it, he would consider it as a provocation to resume the correspondence. The delighted Digby—a mountain off his mind—promised everything, and secretly resolved to withdraw his family from Berlin as speedily as possible, and think of the matter no more. He regarded Claude as his saviour, and swore that, as long as he lived, he should command him to any extent, and that his purse and his life were, and ever should be, at his disposal. The friend whose good sense had rescued him from this disagreeable dilemma wanted neither, and took his leave with the pleasing consciousness of having prevented bloodshed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a warm spring day. The sun was bright on the pleasant *Linden*, and the gay population were abroad enjoying the fine weather. Nothing is so delightful as the approach of spring in these cold climates. Claude was peculiarly alive to such impression; and, as he passed out of the Brandenburg gate into the universal and favourite promenade of the Park, he perceived tokens of the spring visible everywhere around him. This season had stolen upon him unawares. He had been so occupied in the world of fashion with operas, balls, soirées, and breakfasts; with glittering crowds, the same ever-

recurring faces, and all the pomp, glare, and circumstance of magnificent entertainments, that the soft and exquisite forms of half-forgotten nature struck his eye and touched his soul with a sense of happiness. As the various incidents of the now vanished winter rose to his memory—the constant succession of brilliant *fêtes*—the numerous nights which had found him wandering amid the half-fairy splendour of royal saloons, till the breaking day at length sent him to his bed—the new acquaintances he had made—the dark face, full of meaning, of Lady Beverly—the rudeness of Elkington—the bland courtesy of Carolan—the dignified friendship of Madame Wharton—and last, not least, the enchantment which he had found in the society of Ida, and which had daily grown more delicious and more dangerous—all seemed a fantastic dream amid the surrounding silence and solitude. This beautiful forest was now deserted; the city population had not yet begun to appear in its sylvan glades. Only the squirrel paused and listened in the path; while the birds, whose clear notes echoed through the wood, scarcely flew at his approach. The grass had burst out everywhere, and the buttons of the trees were fully opened, disclosing the tender leaves and blossoms. Flowers, some the spontaneous tribute of nature, and some set by the hand of the gardener, were peeping from the wayside or bending over the streams. The earth, long dead, had a warm and living look. Verdure was upon the ground and perfume in the air. Two or three swans, stately as their mistress Juno, came floating down the stream, beneath the arch of a beautiful bridge which hung reflected in the flood; and the air, entirely free from the chill which generally accompanies even the fairest promises of a spring day, as painful recollections of the past sometimes disturb the pleasure of the present, was altogether bland and balmy.

He walked on with a thoughtful pace. The con

duct of Ida had been a kind of mystery to him. Since their cold parting at the *dejeuner* of Prince R., her manner had been generally so formal as to relieve him from the necessity of being on his guard ; yet, at times, this reserve gave place to a gayety so familiar and a kindness so gentle as to startle him with the idea that, while he fancied himself only subjecting his own heart to danger, he was, in reality, also gaining the confidence of this artless and inexperienced girl. He had parted from her the day before, after an interview deeply interesting to him. The passion which had now taken entire possession of his soul had half betrayed itself in her presence, and the sweet instincts of a heart which had lost the power of directing itself, found in her manner so much tenderness even in its reserve, that he could not but doubt that his love was returned. It was at this point that he walked forth to reflect upon his position, with feelings which, although filled with happiness, were not of an enviable kind. What had he done ? He had gained the affections of one affianced to another. He had weakly lingered by the side of one he could never marry, till perhaps their separation would be as much a source of unhappiness to her as to him. This was little more than the act of a scoundrel ; and, in reflecting upon it, he experienced the humiliating consciousness of having deviated from the path of honour. Alas ! so invisible are the lines which separate innocence from guilt, that the most honest sometimes find themselves over the limit before they are aware of it. No mortal step can assure itself against this danger ; but, while the weak and the depraved go on in their career of temptation, the noble-minded start from the flowery road the instant they see where it leads.

“ Can I doubt it ? ” thought Claude, as he wandered into the thickest and most solitary part of the wood. “ She shares my infatuation. Let me, for the

first time, breathe to the air the secret which as yet hovers only in our dreams. She loves me. What power has aided my daring wishes? Some demon, perhaps, to effect my ruin!"

In the ardour of his reveries, he had so far forgotten himself as to utter this rhapsody aloud. It was not without a guilty start that he heard a step at his side, and, lifting his eyes, beheld Madame Wharton.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE shock which the sudden sight of Madame Wharton sent through his frame, checked his hopes and brought him down to earth. He saw from her face that she had not only overheard his rhapsody, but that she understood the full extent of its meaning. Her countenance was grave and severe. Her air quiet and dignified, but full of thought and melancholy. There was something affectionate, but, at the same time, compassionate and even solemn in her manner. He remembered the playful contract they had made together, and he felt, in truth, like Telemachus, when the sober god reproved his weakness or warned him of his danger. The same recollection appeared to occur to Madame Wharton, for she exclaimed,

"Oh youth! confident in times of safety, weak and worthless in the moment of temptation, how fortunate it should consider itself when age, which has passed the allurements of passion, and wisdom, which has learned to despise them, are near enough to rescue it from shame. Little did I think, when in sport I named you Telemachus, that, like the rash boy in the story, you would so soon and so im-

peratively require the hand of a Mentor to tear you from folly and sin, and cast you into the sea."

"Madame," said Claude, "I scarcely know whether you are in jest or in earnest."

"Jest!" said Madame Wharton, almost sternly; and then, pausing and turning pale, she fixed her eyes upon his face with a searchingness of gaze which surprised and embarrassed him.

"How strange! How wonderful!" she continued, in a tone almost of soliloquy.

"What," said Claude, "since you have overheard me, is it so strange that—"

He stopped, for he perceived she was not listening to him.

"Mr. Wyndham," resumed she, presently, in a more familiar tone, "dare I hope I have read your character aright? Among men I have rarely seen one who could comprehend or fittingly reply to an appeal to the morality, the religion of a rational being, when it was opposed by his own interest or passion."

"Your opinion of human nature is a gloomy one," said Claude, relieved to find that the companion who had acquired such influence over him did not immediately enter upon the subject which most occupied his mind.

"And yet I fear," resumed she, "that it is too just. I have not mingled actively in life, but I have regarded it constantly as a spectator, and I have seen much that made me despise, and much that made me pity it; but I have rarely met a man who was the being he was intended to be. I almost tremble to test one for whom I have conceived a strange interest. I almost shrink from searching into the heart of Mr. Claude Wyndham, to find whether the fair promise and the goodly outside are more than a mask and an illusion."

"Ah, madame! what would you say?"

"I have long wished an opportunity of speaking

to you in private. In those gay scenes where alone we meet, you are too much occupied with other and more agreeable thoughts to pay much attention to one of my age and attractions. But here—”

“Say on, madame, though you do me injustice. There is not any one in Berlin whose acquaintance I am more delighted to maintain.”

“Yes, one,” said Madame Wharton.

Claude coloured beneath the calm eyes of his almost austere inquisitor.

“Mr. Wyndham will do me the justice to believe me above idle curiosity or a vulgar desire to listen; but, straying through the wood for a walk, I saw you at a distance, and I have for some time followed and watched you unobserved.”

“Watched me?”

“Yes; not only to-day, in the ramble which you supposed a solitary one, but, since I first met you, I have always watched you. In the scenes amid which the winter has passed away, my former position in society has gained me a place, and my present relation with the family of Count Carolan has made it necessary for me to go. But age and poverty are not too openly welcomed in the gay halls of fashion, and, when admitted, are apt to become spectators of the pleasures of others rather than participators in them. From my quiet seat, Mr. Wyndham, I have followed your footsteps many and many an hour. I have seen the light of joy chase the shadow from your brow; I have seen despair succeed hope, and hope again banish despair.”

“Madame!”

“Did you think that, amid the pressing crowd, there were no minds but what were engaged in their own amusements? Alas! in a ballroom there is but a small part of the throng at ease. The fair scene, which seems given up to mirth, is watched by eyes which behold, without sharing, the enjoyment of innocence and the gayety of youth. Envy, hatred,

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revenge, mingle amid the multitude, glide through the dance, or sit watching from the walls ; and with them also, sad meditation, memory pale and way-worn, to whom the giddy forms of pleasure only recall hours long vanished, and loved ones long in the world of spirits. Calm wisdom, too, my young friend, looks coldly on, and detects the serpent coiled amid the flowers—”

“I hope—I fear—that is, I feel assured, madame—”

“Hear me to the end, Mr. Wyndham. Among these mute but not idle gazers I have held my place, and you have been the principal object of my attention. Will you be offended when I tell you that I have followed your steps, read your actions, and traced all your thoughts and feelings ? It has been the occupation of my winter.”

“Madame,” said Claude, “by what right, with what object ?”

“Be assured,” she continued, “that only the truest friendship could make me think of becoming the guide or preceptor of any gentleman, however young or generous.”

“I will interrupt you no more,” said Claude, astonished to find the reverence with which he listened to such curious avowals from one almost a stranger to him.

“The words in which your revery found vent just now,” continued Madame Wharton, after a short pause, “while they furnish me an opportunity of addressing you, have betrayed to me nothing which I had not discovered before. You *love* the young Countess Ida. You will reveal to me the truth. I shall take the liberty to bestow upon you my advice, and I hope you will follow it.”

“I will,” said Claude, yielding to this extraordinary proposal, and even with that feeling of relief with which a fainting traveller leans on the first passing stranger who offers to assist him.

“You love the young Countess Ida,” repeated

Madame Wharton ; " speak to me as to your own heart."

There was a short pause.

" I—I do," said Claude, at length.

" Notwithstanding your resolutions to the contrary—notwithstanding my warnings—notwithstanding that you knew her to be the affianced bride of another—notwithstanding the difference of rank between yourself and her—notwithstanding—"

" Notwithstanding all," said Claude ; " since you seek my confidence—since I feel assured you are incapable of abusing it, I repeat, then, notwithstanding all, I love her. We are not the masters of our destiny—of our feelings. I cannot keep the sun from warming me, the winter from chilling me, nor such a mind and beauty as that of the Countess Ida from filling and mastering my heart."

" You have also," resumed Madame Wharton, coldly, " in various ways, if not actually declared, at least betrayed, the passion you acknowledge."

" I think—I fear—I do not suppose—I never intended—"

" Speak frankly and explicitly. I have ventured upon this interview from the consideration that your heart, if it is weak and wavering, is also noble ; that the same capacity which gives it the force to love, tenderly bestows the yet higher power of acting heroically when duty requires."

Claude fixed his eyes on his inquisitor, as if he feared some demand which would try his resolution severely.

" Madame," he answered, " I cannot doubt that my admiration has been revealed in the long intercourse which I have had with this young girl. It has not been the result of intention, but my inability to prevent it."

" And you presume she has seen this ?"

" What can I think—what dare I conjecture ?"

" Let me put an end to your modest perplexity,"

said Madame Wharton. "Ida does *not* know, does not *dream* you love her."

"How, madame!" said Claude, on whom this abrupt assertion inflicted a pang as painful as it was unexpected. "How can that be asserted? How can it be known? Who can penetrate into the recesses of a young girl's heart?"

"I can," replied she, coldly. "I know her every thought and wish."

"But—it—is possible," said Claude, "that she may have never revealed—never confided even to you—even to herself—"

"Secrets neither revealed to me nor confided to herself," said Madame Wharton, "can scarcely deserve to become the foundation for such a fabric of hope and bliss as, I fear, you have reared upon them. But, to reply more definitely to your doubt; although some young ladies may have such ethereal secrets, Ida is not one who, even were she too timid to reveal them, could be artful enough to conceal them by any false statement; and she this day assured me that you are the affianced husband of Miss Mary Digby."

Claude coloured to the temples.

"Madame," he said, "I solemnly assure you there is not the shadow of truth in this, and you will eternally oblige me by—"

"Undeceiving her—"

"Instantly."

"For what end?"

"For—for—in order that—" he stopped.

"Is it your intention to offer yourself to Count Carolan as the candidate for the hand of his daughter?"

"No, certainly—no, madame."

"Mr. Wyndham," said Madame Wharton, "I take you to be one of the few who will never, from selfish considerations, deviate from the path of right. Intervals of weakness—periods when the mists and

fumes of error blind the eyes and mislead the steps—I can grant you these. They are but tokens of that mortality, which God, for his own purposes, has made frail and feeble, and has sent adrift like a ship at sea, to meet the wild tempest and the hidden rock. I forgive you all the folly you have committed up to this moment in loving my young charge.”

“Oh, madame, a thousand, thousand thanks,” said Claude. “We are, indeed, weak and frail—cursed with passions which we cannot command—placed amid temptations which we cannot resist—we are in the hands of fate—we are straws on the stream—we go down unresistingly into the whirlpool.”

“You have pronounced here the silliest words that ever fell from the lips of an honest man,” said Madame Wharton. “You forget the character which alone distinguishes man from the beast, when you make him such a contemptible machine. No, sir, we are gifted with passions for the purpose of commanding them; we are placed amid temptations in order that we may resist them. It is the narrow mind and the vulgar heart alone which permit themselves to become straws on the tide. The lofty soul directs its course *against* the stream. It beholds from afar the whirlpool, and avoids it by the independent force lent by Heaven. The most sublime sight in the universe is a man tempted by the allurements of earth—the mental part within him urging him to yield—and, with opportunity to grasp that which he desires, yet, by the exercise of a self-controlling *sense of right*, passing by the thing he yearns for—living without it, and turning his back upon it for ever.”

“I implore you, madame,” said Claude, “to speak to me freely.”

“Then hear me! You cannot cherish an affection for Ida without a selfish criminality incompatible with the character of an honourable man.”

The heart of Madame Wharton almost failed as

she felt herself inflicting the greatest pang of which his nature was susceptible; but, like a skilful surgeon, who knows that firmness is the truest kindness, she went on.

"The idea that you are a warm and accepted lover of Miss Digby, is generally received in Berlin. It was formally communicated to Ida by one who professed to have received the fact from your own lips."

"And that person was—"

"Lord Elkington."

"I thought so," said Claude. "It only confirms my opinion of him as a perfidious scoundrel!"

"I did not myself believe it, and I give up the last feeling of esteem for Lord Elkington, as for any man capable of uttering a falsehood. But I must tell you that the belief of this report has been Ida's protection."

"Ah, madame—"

"She does *not* love you—she does not think you love her. Your conclusions have been rash and impetuous; but, as yet, your actions have been more guarded."

"Oh, madame," said Claude, "if I may—if I dare draw from your words the inference which they seem to admit, I should be the happiest of men. If I understand you correctly, she of whom you speak—but for an error which any moment may rectify, which cannot be long without exposure—would have learned the interest I have conceived for her, and that without displeasure."

"I am not prepared to make such an ample admission; but suppose it were true, what would be your course?"

"I would throw myself at her feet—appeal frankly to her father and mother."

Madame Wharton smiled.

"Ah, sir, you little know Count Carolan."

"Yes, madame; he is all bounty, all benevolence. Already he is my friend."

“Alas!” said Madame Wharton, “how much you require a guide! There is not in all Germany a man more imperative, more stercorally despotic in his own family, more fixed and immutable in his prejudices, passions, and plans. His determinations once formed, all earth, all heaven cannot change them. No one is more haughty, more unrelenting, more aspiring, more devoted to rank than he. I assure you—for we are speaking in confidence—he would not only let *you* perish before he would hear of such a thing, but he would see *Ida* perish also; he would become himself her executioner, rather than see her married out of her sphere in life.”

“What do you tell me?” cried Claude.

“What I have told you long before—what every one would have told you, had you examined the subject before you staked so much peace of mind upon it; and as for his friendship for you, it is made up partly of the love of patronising, partly of the pomp of display. He is bland and familiar, because he thinks the distance between you so immeasurable that there can be no danger of your being confounded as his equal. Were you a higher personage, you would have found him more difficult and disagreeable. Long prosperity, immense wealth, have inflated his heart, and true sensibility is long ago extinguished in his bosom. The moment you wound the feelings, or especially the *vanity* of Count Carolan, you will find him an enemy as implacable as if you had committed against him the most flagrant outrage.”

“Can it be possible? And where have been my eyes? What has made me so blind?”

“You have not been blind, but only premature in forming your opinions. Men must not be judged in the drawing-room. They who are polite to you are not consequently good men, and Count Carolan, unfortunately, is a man of a conceited and cold heart, and a very feeble understanding. His god is him-

self. He thinks of nothing else; and there is no enemy so merciless as a fool. I give you these hints frankly, that you may know your ground, and not precipitate yourself publicly into any awkward position."

"And the Countess Carolan—?"

"Like her husband, she is the worshipper of rank. It has become nature to them. Their tastes, or prejudices, perhaps, you will be pleased to call them, they have inherited, you must remember, from generations of haughty ancestors; and the tendency of their nature has been confirmed—if, indeed, it required confirmation—by education and example. You smile."

"I cannot but wonder that people should disregard the substance and realities of life, and sacrifice hope, charity, and happiness for empty names and glittering shadows."

"Continue, if you please," said Madame Wharton, gravely, "to wonder and despise; but, till you are beyond the danger of error yourself, you must not be too severe upon those of others."

"May I ask if Ida—if the Countess Ida shares their opinions?"

"Frankly, no. She has pride as high as theirs, but of a different kind, and she is *perfectly safe* from more than a momentary pang while she supposes herself less than the sole object."

"I understand you," said Claude.

"And now let me put this case to you," said Madame Wharton, "as the Carolans—as the world will put it. You are a guest at Count Carolan's, recommended by an intimate friend. It is generally believed that you are all but the husband of another. This report, so universal that it appears impossible you could have overlooked it, is confirmed beyond a doubt by your conduct—I believe accidental, but others will not think so—towards the lady and her eccentric family."

"You amaze me. Pray explain."

"Your frequent visits to their house—your accompanying them to the opera—your openly expressed interest in the parents, which appeared possible to originate only in attachment to the daughter—their immense wealth—the girl's beauty, modesty, and grace—and your obvious devotion to them, and anxiety to be in their company at the *déjeuner* of Prince R—"

"Gracious Heaven, madame—I assure you—"

"Pray do not interrupt me. Whether true or false, this opinion prevailed; whether accidentally or intentionally, your own actions sanctioned it. Under these circumstances—thus the world will say—you stole into a noble and wealthy family, where your plausible demeanour gained you confidence, and your very want of rank placed in your way facilities which would have been cautiously withheld from a person less insignificant."

"Madame—"

"Here, sir, you *stole*—for every member of the family believed you to be in a position in which, it appears, you were not; trusted by the father, who thought you above meanness—"

"Madame—"

"I am speaking *not* my own sentiments, and I am risking your esteem, which I greatly value, in order to let you learn, without delay or disgrace, what the world will say."

"Perhaps, madame, your imagination is too lively in drawing sketches of the future," said Claude, haughtily.

Madame Wharton regarded him as he lifted his tall form with an air of cold anger, and she grew as pale as he. Several times, indeed, in the course of this conversation, she interrupted herself to fix her eyes upon his face, with an interest which seemed independent of the subject on which she spoke.

"Well, then, what the world *has* said," resumed

she. "It is the talk of the town. Your attentions to Ida have not been unobserved; and it is openly asserted that, under a false character—that of the affianced husband of another—which character you have assumed deliberately and supported with skill—nay, even under a false name—"

"Madame—"

"You have employed your winter in endeavouring to win the affections of an inexperienced girl—to raise yourself to a rank of life above your own—to relieve your poverty with her princely fortune."

Claude stood silent and haughty, scarcely knowing whether to conceive his companion an enemy or a friend.

"I need not add, that, for myself," said Madame Wharton, "I repose implicit confidence in the purity of your intentions and the nobleness of your character. You have unwarily allowed yourself to be surrounded by the illusions of a passion, as far removed from the possibilities of real life as perhaps it is superior in enchantment. As to my confidence in you, I have already given you tokens by addressing you at all on the subject, by speaking to you the language of moral right, by which a noble mind alone could be governed. I shall presently give you another, by preferring a second request. In the mean time, I thought it my duty, as your sincere friend, to make you acquainted (for there are others besides these of a very serious kind) with the calumnies going about respecting you; calumnies so painfully mixed up with truth as to require all your attention."

"Ah, madame," said Claude, "do you advise that I refer them to the ordinary remedy in use among gentlemen, and which would procure me a vengeance which I do not desire, or render me a victim without clearing my name?"

"No, sir. I have learned that you are from principle placed beyond the possibility of ever fighting

a duel. It is that which confirms my respect for your character. It is that which makes you in my eyes superior to the common class of men, who are destitute of lofty and enlarged principles of action. I am above the weakness of suspecting your courage ; but I rather admire it, because you have the dignity and the humanity to decline a duel."

"Tell me," said Claude, after a pause, "what reports? The character which is not above calumny deserves it. An honest life is the only reply to a slander. What reports?"

Yet, notwithstanding his efforts to remain composed, he felt the blood flowing more impetuously through his veins, and his cheek burn with shame and indignation.

"It is asserted that you are not what you profess to be!"

"Not?"

"That you are a wanderer—an adventurer—in short, a *chevalier d'industrie*!"

"Ah, madame," said Claude, "you have done me, indeed, injustice if you supposed me likely to be moved by a piece of scandal so idle and so easily exposed."

"But how is it to be exposed?"

"I should think Lord Perceval's letter—"

"It is asserted that Lord Perceval never wrote that letter."

"A reference to him will at once—"

"How—do you not know—you have not then heard—"

"Heard what?"

"That Lord Perceval is dead?"

"Gracious Heaven!"

"He is dead, sir. The news came by yesterday's mail."

"He was almost my only friend," said Claude, his eyes filling with tears.

The obvious sincerity of his astonishment and

anguish touched and convinced Madame Wharton. Her own eyes also glittered through a hidden moisture as she said,

“No, Mr. Wyndham; if you wish, if you will accept it, you may depend upon the friendship of another. I am in a position of life to do you little service, but my friendship may not be worthless. You are in a dangerous crisis. If I read you aright, you are capable of any self-sacrifice, and you will never shrink from duty unless the mists of passion hide it from your view. Let it be my task to waft these mists from before your eyes—to restore you to the coolness and dignity of a moral being—to lead you from hopes that destroy, and temptations that degrade you. You are on the brink of a precipice; one step, and you not only fall yourself, but—”

“Madame, go on.”

“*She will perish with you!*”

“I tremble at your words,” said Claude, greatly moved; “a tumult of joy—hope—fear—despair—takes from me the power to think of anything but the half confession which you have twice made this morning. What is your meaning? What is your object? Have you come like my better angel, to bestow upon me, after all, the prize which would make me too happy for a mortal, or have you—”

“I have thought you a person who could be better governed by honour than by other means. I have determined to trust to that character, which I think I perceive in you, to make no concealment; to lead you by none of the intrigues and duplicity which may be necessary in dealing with inferior minds. I resolved to show you the whole ground as it lies at your feet; to point to the path of passion, because your comprehension is enlarged enough to see where it leads; and to show you, on the other hand, that of duty, which I believe you will choose the moment you yield yourself to your habitual contemplations.”

“I will do anything—I will follow any path—

make any sacrifice," said Claude, "which may be necessary for the happiness of Ida; but if she loves me—"

"She does *not* love you," said Madame Wharton, coldly, "but she thinks of you too much. She thinks you superior to other men. She has a mind to comprehend the difference between yourself and the gentleman to whom she is about to be united. She—"

"Oh, go on."

"Had Heaven not thrown between you a chasm impassable—had no previous engagement existed between Elkington and herself—had she not supposed your affections devoted, your hand pledged to another—had she not beheld that other pre-eminently lovely, and beheld also, with all the world, your attentions to her, Ida *might*—"

"Go on, madame, and I am your slave for ever."

"Might have loved you; nay, more, I will speak to you frankly, she would have known with you a happiness she can never know with Elkington, for I think you in character and disposition fitted for each other."

"It is the wildest vision of joy," said Claude, "that ever blessed the eyes of a mortal."

"Relying on your honour as a gentleman," continued Madame Wharton, "I have made you, in confidence, this confession, on two conditions. You said you would obey me if I would go so far, and I trust entirely to your honour."

"I repeat it," said Claude.

"Prepare to be put, then, to a severe test."

Claude's colour left his cheek. His ardent triumph had already subsided, and he almost held his breath as she continued,

"In the first place, you will never act on the strength of the confession I have made you?"

"I never will, madame."

"In the next—and I would never have revealed to

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you what has fallen this minute from my lips, but as an equivalent for the sacrifice I am about to ask of you, and, if you please, as a reward—”

“Speak on; I know what you will demand. Banish me, if you will, to the farthest corner of the globe. Indeed, I should have thus exiled myself of my own accord. I will leave her. I will never see her more. I will not even bid her one last adieu. I will fly this instant.”

“I do not wish you to fly,” said Madame Wharton.

“Not fly?”

“I do not object to your seeing Ida again, as usual, on your pledge as a gentleman to bear yourself so towards her as if no such feelings had ever been between you. On the contrary, I should *oppose* any abrupt disappearance, which would only excite suspicion, awaken curiosity, and produce, perhaps, in her bosom an idea which I wish to avoid. Flight, perhaps, would be the easiest course for *you*—your mind once made up to suffer the interest which Ida has felt for you to be extinguished, without making an effort, even by a *look*, to rekindle it. Flight would be easier, I know, than this task; but it might leave in the heart of my young friend feelings which must not exist there; an image which must be entirely effaced. Her future happiness, her future duties require it. Fly you may, certainly, at the proper moment; but, *before* you fly—”

She hesitated, and Claude also awaited, with a feeling of dread, the conclusion of her harangue.

“*Before* you fly, you must assist in repairing the evil your imprudence and weakness, if not your guilt, have occasioned. You must aid me in extinguishing utterly the first spark which may have found its way into her bosom.”

“And how am I to assist in this self-sacrifice?” said Claude. “How am I to immolate my reputation, my honour?”

"If your object be her happiness, whenever you see the impossibility of her union with you, you will, for her sake, wish her to forget you. The expression of this wish in *words* is easy and unmeaning. Contribute towards it, sir, by your actions. Before you quit Berlin, she must believe you attached to another."

"That, you say, is already her opinion."

"So it is; but your manner to her has sometimes made it waver. Let it be so no more. Neither seek nor avoid her society; make no attempt to inspire her with a different opinion, but—"

"What will she think of me?—that I have trifled with her peace in mere sport."

"Never be dissuaded," said Madame Wharton, "from a course you know to be the right one by an idea of consequences. Perhaps, if her esteem, her respect for you were diminished—perhaps, if—"

"She thought me a scoundrel," said Claude, bitterly.

"You would save *her* from the pangs which now tear your own heart, and may, perhaps, shade your future life with sorrow. If your position is awkward, you must remember your own rashness has placed you in it. Are you capable of this sacrifice? Have you the *real* love for her to sacrifice yourself—your nicest feelings—for her happiness, even when that happiness can never be shared by you; even when it will lighten the path and cheer the heart of your foe? Are you capable of acting from a high moral sentiment, unrewarded but by the approbation of your own heart and of Heaven?"

"May I ask if you are authorized by the Count and Countess Carolan to procure from me these concessions?" demanded Claude.

"Frankly, I am; and, more frankly, could you but have heard the terms of astonishment and indignation in which the count expressed himself re-

specting the affair, when at length informed of it by Lady Beverly, you would thank me for having interfered to spare you a collision with one who—
who—once offended, knows no bounds to his resentment.”

“And where originate the aspersions against my character?”

“Have you no suspicion?”

“Lord Elkington?”

“Certainly. He and his mother have both perceived the growing interest you have excited, and are, I think, naturally enough, indignant at an interference so unauthorized, and so fatal to their happiness. Lord Elkington is, has been, and, though I know not why, probably always will be, your enemy. He is busy everywhere in blackening your name.”

“I believe I know him!” said Claude.

“Will you then consent, for the happiness of Ida, to the course I mark out for you? I speak, Mr. Wyndham, as a mother to her son. I am deeply interested in the happiness of this tender girl, and she thinks too much of you. Whether the feelings with which she now regards you deepen into love or subside back to pique—to indifference—to dislike, perhaps—depends upon yourself. Marry her you never can, under any circumstances. She is, moreover, affianced to Elkington, who is chosen by her father; and Count Carolan cannot be moved when he has made up his determination. He is one of those men who are firm because they are feeble-minded and cold-hearted. His vanity points ever one way, and reason and feeling have no influence over him. I should long since have implored mercy for Ida on this subject, had I not known that it would be useless. Besides, Lord Elkington’s wealth, his rank, his great expectations, partly supply his deficiencies.”

“They are poor substitutes,” said Claude, bitterly.

"If, then, by word or action—if, even by a *look*, you exercise the power which you begin to possess over this innocent and yet happy girl—if you light the fire of hopeless passion in her now calm and peaceful heart—if, for a selfish intoxication of your own, you put that poison into her cool and healthy veins which now flows burningly through yours—if, without a higher or wiser object than the momentary gratification of your weakness, you thus darken and shipwreck her future life, young man, you are a *villain*, or a creature so *weak* and unworthy, that, to make her despise you, it will only be sufficient to paint you as you are."

"Spare me, madame," said Claude, covering his eyes with his hand.

"Give me your promise never to undeceive her in the belief that you love another—however humiliating to your pride, however harrowing to your passion—or fly and see her no more. Your flight will reveal to her the truth, rash and selfish boy; and you may solace your own misery by the consciousness that you have been the cause of hers. Yes, she will love you; she will see, then, that you love her. She is but too much inclined already."

"Ah! why may she not requite the sincerest, the holiest love that—"

"Do not mock truth with words so false," said Madame Wharton. "She will requite your love, but how? From that moment she will be for ever wretched. She will be given up to the tortures of disappointed love. Too well I know her nature. She might fly *with* you, perhaps, but she would carry ruin with her, and leave misery behind. You will be the means of introducing discord into the family that welcomed you with open hospitality, and of wilfully destroying the happiness of an inexperienced girl, rash enough to love, weak enough to trust you."

"If I throw myself at Carolan's feet—" said

Claude, agitated ; for these half admissions of Madame Wharton deprived him, in some degree, of his usual self-possession and good sense.

“ He will insult and spurn you. I have not thought it necessary to repeat the expressions he made use of when he learned the danger that threatened his daughter. If her life depended on her union with you, both her parents would rather see her in her grave. No one not nobly born, not able to support her in the sphere to which she has been accustomed, and to perpetuate the family honours, will ever receive the hand of Ida Carolan. She is the last of her race. Upon that child depends the continuation of one of the noblest families of Europe ; and you, Mr. Wyndham—I ask it not in a spirit of unkindness—what have *you* to offer ?”

“ I oppose no more,” said Claude. “ I yield. From this time, neither by word nor look, will I prevent the state of mind you wish to produce in her. Ida is another’s. Tell her of me what you please ; I will never contradict or explain. I have been weak. I will be so no more.”

“ I trust you implicitly,” said Madame Wharton.

“ I hope you may do so, madame.”

“ And you will not leave Berlin immediately ?”

“ I will remain till you yourself bid me go.”

“ It is a perilous task, young man.”

“ I will perform it !” said Claude.

“ She will never know,” said Madame Wharton, “ how ready you have been to sacrifice your happiness to hers ; but *I* shall not forget ; you have done your duty. Not *love* itself, with all its charms, would ever make you so truly happy. Adieu.”

She extended her hand. He raised it with reverence to his lips, and they parted.

CHAPTER XX.

CLAUDE stood a moment motionless, in the attitude in which Madame Wharton had left him. He was stunned with the unexpected turn his affairs had taken, and the long and exciting interview he had had with this singular person upon the most interesting theme which could occupy his thoughts. He could not account for the influence she exercised over him. He sunk beneath her frown, and rejoiced in her smile, as if she had, indeed, been the Goddess of Wisdom in mortal form, descended from heaven to point out to his eyes, blinded with passion, the path of duty. Her tones swayed his mind and touched his heart with a persuasive power; and in her majestic countenance he traced lineaments which, in a singular degree, riveted his attention, and awakened his reverence and love. There are people who strike the eye at the first glance; produce an impression of beauty or dignity, which grows weaker the more they are seen and known. There are others who, without discovering themselves at first, disclose in each subsequent interview most interesting peculiarities of expression and manner. The form, before unobserved, moves with an increasing grace and charm, and the countenance discloses hidden powers. Madame Wharton was one of this kind. Claude could scarcely recognise in her the unobtrusive lady whom he first met in the diligence. The more he saw her, the more he admired and wondered, the nobler became her gait, the more impressive and intellectual her countenance. Her smile discovered a sweetness, and her eyes a light, which shed, even yet, around her features a kind of mellow beauty more imposing than the charms of youth. It was her

character and mind which shone through her face and actions. When she quitted him—her eyes, lately so severe, bathed in tears—he could scarcely refrain from throwing himself at her feet. Indeed, he had done more. He had sworn to be her slave. The playful compact, originally commenced in jest, had suddenly turned to very serious earnest; and, at the command of this poor and neglected stranger—as if she had been an angry angel—he had pledged himself to abandon for ever the prize which seemed nearly within his reach, and upon which the whole happiness of his life depended. As he reflected upon the extent of this pledge, his feelings rose against it, and already he began to regret it. Under the fascination of this woman he had signed his ruin.

“Yes,” he thought, “I have sworn an eternal adieu to Ida. Had it been but separation, I could have borne it with patience. The consciousness that we understood and loved each other, would have been, at least, one gleam of sunshine on my path; but this is a tearing asunder of heart and soul. And, if I feel pain, I know I shall inflict it. I shall meet her coldly. Her gaze will once more seek mine in vain. Her smile will be unreturned. She will wonder. She will tremble.” She will think me capricious and treacherous. Horror at such baseness will be succeeded by shame, and shame by resentment. What will become of me? and what will become of her, if she throw herself away upon this profligate? Perhaps she will degenerate into a mere woman of the world. With him she cannot be happy, unless she ceases to be what a woman should be. With me, even in poverty—ah! dangerous and useless thoughts! some demon breathes them into my mind. I must indulge in them no more. Whatever pangs it may cost me, the path I have chosen is right. I knew it even before this strange being arose, as if out of the

earth, to shame me from my weakness. Yes, I renew the oath. Ida—sweet angel—for ever adieu! Only image of earthly happiness, I waft thee to the winds!”

As he walked on, the afternoon sunshine fell bright and yellow upon the forest floor. The birds warbled in the branches—all nature seemed full of joy. His way led through devious paths and over fairy-looking bridges; and, penetrating yet farther into its hitherto unexplored recesses, the wood appeared to grow deeper and lovelier every moment. After a winter devoted merely to scenes of fashion, the peaceful and familiar forms of nature struck his long unaccustomed eye with a beauty which he had never before so keenly perceived, and to which the tender anguish of his soul only rendered him more susceptible. Everything seemed bathed in enchanting hues and disposed in graceful outlines. He was gifted with a lively feeling of that exquisite perfection which lies even in the rudest and commonest forms of nature, and his eye did not fall upon a spot of the earth or heaven without receiving a sensation of wonder and delight. Sometimes, through the long avenues, he caught a vista of the meadows softened in the distance—the windmill casting its broken shadow upon the ground—or the sail gliding peacefully along the narrow *Spree*. The leaning trees, with their rough-barked trunks immediately around him, tinged with silver or clothed with hoary moss; the brown earth, with its glittering pebbles—the tender lawns—the soft clouds sailing in the blue air, like swans on a transparent flood—the whole scene, and the reflections of it, hanging inverted in the water—all touched his soul with pensive delight, and made him sigh to gaze on a world so lovely, and to feel that, amid the thousands who enjoyed it, *he* was an outcast and a wretch, to whom its very charms only brought an augmentation of sorrow.

He stopped and looked around him. A piece of rude timber, the half-hewn trunk of a tree lately felled, and not yet removed by the workmen, lay rough and silent beneath an old oak ; but the light fell upon it in such a way, that, had it been formed of ivory or gold, it could not have been more beautiful. A little farther on lay a plough, partly overturned in a track of black earth—its print left in an unfinished furrow—its bright steel edges glittering in the yellow light through the heavy pieces of mould which adhered to it. In the mellow sunshine its worn handle looked like amber. There was something in the sight of it which aroused a new train of reflection. He gazed on this rude utensil. It seemed to reproach the idle and careless life which he had led in the pursuit of fashionable pleasures ; of a luxurious and vain mode of life, as little suited to his means and condition as to the true dignity of human nature. What had *he* to do with fashion—with costly pleasure—with weak love ? This simple image rose in his path like a rebuke—a type of that toil to which the guilt of the first criminals consigned the human race, and which he had never known. For how many ages had it been consecrated by the sweat of honest and humble hands, of which some, perhaps, with equal firmness, might have held the helm of state or the truncheon of war—the monarch's sceptre—the poet's pen ?

“Sturdy emblem,” he thought, as he continued to muse, for it was in musing, instead of action, that his life had passed away—“simple type of manly labour and independence—ancient instrument which a benevolent Creator has given to a race he wishes to save—at whose touch the brown earth opens and gives the golden harvest, that sheds joy and splendour over the fields and valleys, and sends peace, and sleep, and plenty into the cottage of the poor. Ah ! why did not fate make me but the contented master of one of these !”

And he went on, dreaming as youth dreams, till aroused by the cold touch of reality to less pleasing occupations.

CHAPTER XXI.

HE was interrupted in his reveries by a sudden burst of military music, and he presently found himself arrived safe at a road which was thronged by the *beau monde* who drive from the town, and, leaving their carriages, here walk to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. At the present moment it was occupied by a body of troops stationed on one side. A crowd of spectators were ranged in a large square. Among them he saw Digby with a party. They were on the opposite side; and the honest fellow, discovering Claude, immediately started to join him. He took the shortest way, which was through the hollow square. He had not advanced many steps when two or three sub-officers shouted to him; then two or three more. Not understanding the language, and not supposing their shouts directed to him, the honest fellow walked on, leisurely twirling his glove, and his face lighted with pleasure at the sight of his friend. His pertinacity, however, in continuing to advance, after the sentinels had ordered him to come back, awakened strong symptoms of wrath in those arbitrary personages. Seven at a time started off after the rebel who so coolly put them and their commands at defiance. Digby had got about two thirds of the way, when he was surprised by a heavy blow across the shoulder, and, on turning round, the self-satisfied smile at once vanished from his countenance, as he beheld seven soldiers, each nearly as many feet in height, the lower part of their faces half hidden beneath mustaches,

and their countenances red and their eyes flashing with rage, and making violent gesticulations at him, in the course of which their drawn swords sometimes flourished so near to his ears as to put him in considerable trepidation. One took him by the shoulder and twirled him round with little ceremony, while he asked him a vociferous question totally unintelligible, which he had scarcely heard, before he was spun round by another, and then by a third, to his infinite indignation and dismay. At length—upon shouting out, at the top of his voice, in horrible German, that he did not speak that language, and making his persecutors comprehend that the reason why he had not turned back when they called him, was, that he did not understand what they said, or knew that they were speaking to him—one gave him a shove, and another honoured him with what was very nearly a kick, and he was hauled and thrust back into the nearest point of the crowd before Claude could get to his aid.

“Did you ever—a—a—Mr.—a—a—Wyndham—see anything—so—so—a—a—infamous as the proceedings of those gentlemen? If I don’t—a—a—understand their—a—a—cursed, stupid language—is that—a—a—reason—I appeal to you—for them to—offer—a—a—a—to kick me in that style? If there’s justice in Europe, I’ll—a—a—have it.”

It was with difficulty that Claude could refrain from laughing at the intense indignation of his friend; but he endeavoured to sooth him by telling him that, after he had got through the French, he could learn the German in a short time. If anything could have added to Digby’s rage, it was the idea of learning more languages.

“No,” said he, “I have quite enough with the French, I assure you; and a more ridiculous and—a—a—a—absurd and—a—a—I never heard. The infamous scoundrels!—Ah! yonder comes my wife with old ‘long pockets.’”

As he spoke, Mrs. Digby, with her daughter and Mr. Lippe, came up.

"Well, Mr. Wyndham," said Mrs. Digby, "did you ever see such an awful fool as John is? I told him he could not go across there, and yet he thinks he knows best. Did not you catch it, now? To be kicked and cuffed in that style before all Berlin—but he thinks nobody knows anything but himself."

"Agreeable, ain't it?" said Digby, in a whisper. "To be first knocked about like a shuttlecock by those infernal scoundrels, and then bullied in this style by one's wife. The fact is, Mrs. Digby's a very excellent woman; but—"

And he placed his finger significantly on his forehead, and made a grimace intended as an insinuation against the sane state of that lady's understanding.

"But bless me! how pale you are, Mr. Wyndham!" said Mrs. Digby. "You must be unwell!"

"No, not in the least!"

"You do, indeed, look very pale," said Mary.

"Now join us—do; and take a little walk—do," said Mrs. Digby. "It'll do you good, I'm sure it will. Mary, take Mr. Wyndham's arm. Now I sha'n't wait for an invitation. Any one as knows me knows I'm all above board, and no nonsense; so I'll take the other. Now, John, you and old Lippe can take a stroll across the square, if you've a mind to, and have another tussle with those gentlemen. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I must say, my dear," said Digby, "that I think your—a—a—wit is considerably more—a—a—conspicuous than your—a—a—manners."

"By-the-way, they say your great friend, my Lord Elkington, is getting on famously. They say his father's at the last gasp."

"Do you call that getting on famously?" said Claude.

"Why, *he* thinks so, I'll be sworn," said Mrs.

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Digby. "They say that they ain't the peaceablest family in the world, and, when the old fellow pops off, then my lord will be the Earl of Beverly, and so rich that he won't be able to count the guineas."

"But, holla!" said Digby, "here he comes on horseback."

"And the whole set of them," said Mrs. Digby.

As she spoke, Elkington and Carolan, with Ida between them, rode up. The Digbys saluted them very ostentatiously. Ida bowed. Her eyes fell on Claude, and her sunshiny smile went to his heart. It had been his first impulse to step back, so as not to be seen with Miss Digby, after the report which he had just heard was current upon the subject; but he remembered himself in time to prevent such a step, which, trifling as it was, would not have been in strict accordance with his promise. She saw him, therefore. He bowed carelessly. It seemed as if Mary hung more closely on his arm as she passed. He saw that Ida had perceived her, and that it would confirm her belief. Elkington and Carolan both evidently recognised the party, but neither bowed; and, as they were riding at a brisk pace, they were soon out of sight.

"Well, she is a pretty creature," said Digby, "and a kind one."

"Do you go to Monsieur de B——'s to-night?" asked Claude, by way of saying something.

"Not I," said Digby, bluntly. "I go nowhere in society again."

"Well, *I do*," said Mrs. Digby, bridling up.

"As you please, Mrs. Digby—as you please—but *I don't*—and that's as unchangeable—as—as—a—a—I don't budge an inch."

"Are you to be there, Mr. Wyndham?" inquired Mrs. Digby.

"Yes, madam!" said Claude.

"Well, I sha'n't," said Digby.

"Now, my dear papa—"

"Now, John—"

"I've said, it, ma'am," said Digby, with an air of fierce determination. "I'll have nothing more to do with your *ho-tong*. Why, a man can't even sit down there, sir, and he can't stand up, for fear of—a—a—turning his back to some one; and he can't go away, for fear of leaving some one behind him; and he can't walk, for fear—of—a—a—finding some one—a—a—before him; and I can't dance, and I can't talk. I lost thirty Louis the other night by attempting to play. Thirty Louis in—a—a—a—one night!"

"John," said Mrs. Digby, "how *can* you be such a fool?"

"Well, fool or no fool, Mrs. D., I tell you, once for all, I *won't go*. I won't—a—a—a—go—ma'am."

"Why, mamma," said Mary, as if suddenly struck with a good idea, "why can't Mr. Wyndham take us? He just said he was going, and we can call for him in our carriage!"

"Why, good Lord! so we can," said Mrs. Digby; "what a set of fools we are, to be sure. Certainly—plain as day. Pray do us the kindness, Mr. Wyndham."

"If you please, madam," said Claude; and he reflected upon the pleasure his appearance with them would give Madame Wharton; how it would gratify Elkington and Lady Beverly; how it would confirm the opinion and alienate the feelings of Ida. It was arranged, therefore, according to the proposal of Mary, that he should attend the Digbys to Monsieur de B——'s, the minister.

Claude now looked up from a brown study, and observed Monsieur Lippe, to whom he addressed some commonplace observation.

"Ah! you've got hold of our Mr. Lippe, have you?" said Mrs. Digby. "Well, he's a droll fellow, to be sure. You needn't look so astonished;

he don't understand a word we say, poor devil. It's just like being with a dumb beast. He's a most useful person, though, I assure you. He lives with us now altogether."

"Indeed!"

"Oh, yes. He interprets for us—teaches us German and French—does a great many useful jobs about the house—orders the things we want from the shops—buys everything—pays all our bills—makes all our bargains—and reads the French tactics to Mary."

"The French tactics?"

"Classics, mamma," said Mary.

"Well, child—classics—tactics—it's all the same, you know, in Dutch; we never stir without him; in short, he's our right-hand man—our chief cook and bottle-washer; and, what's very remarkable, too, he doesn't charge scarcely anything for his services. He only gets three thalers a week, besides his board. He offered to come for that; and it was so scandalously cheap, I could not refuse it. Now this was one of *my* bargains. It would have been a long while before John would have had the wit to make such a one."

"Yes, a confounded long while," said Digby.

"I believe he knows everybody and everything in the world. He is the most agreeable, honest, simple creature. He has, I assure you, no more idea of taking care of himself than a child of six. The other day I gave him twelve groschen to buy something for himself; and what do you think—he came and returned me back a groschen, saying he had got the article for eleven. He is the greatest prize in the world; and we're so much pleased with him, that I made John let him go to a tailor and choose himself a complete suit of clothes. You see he's very fine about these days."

Indeed, now that his attention was directed towards him, Claude observed that he was certainly

improved in appearance. He was very showily dressed, in the height of the fashion ; smelled strongly of *eau de Cologne*, and had more the air of a dandy than a person of his unobtrusive profession. Thus apparelled, he had assumed the character of a favourite steward or man of charge, taking this interesting family under his guidance as we see a *cicerone* take a party of bewildered and obedient travellers. Sometimes he made them stop to point out the residence of a great man ; sometimes to call their attention to a view through the long arcades of trees, which here and there, like the aisles of a Gothic church, extend for a mile or two beneath the arched branches, till the straight line fades to a point in the perspective. Here he made them walk a long way round to avoid a damp place, and there he conducted them, even contrary to their wishes, where they might feel the sunshine. But what pleased Madame Digby more than all was, that he frequently addressed the family, or spoke of them as "monseigneur" and "milady." In short, Mr. Lippe was fairly installed, and began to grow fat and sleek upon sleep, cessation from care, and hearty living. His late meager face had filled up into a very respectable outline ; and his complexion, from a dry olive, had assumed a more rubicund and greasy look.

No one gave more elegant soirées than Monsieur de B——, and he received in the same splendid manner once a week. In the evening, as had been arranged, the Digbys called for Claude, and he accompanied them to one of those entertainments. Often before had he entered this spacious palace, and ascended to those very rooms with a heart beating with hope and love. How bitterly did he now lament his folly in having indulged such dreams, and still more in having betrayed them to the confiding girl whom he was now to meet with assumed coldness ! How strange was his position. In order

to be worthy of her, he was to throw her away. His clear reason whispered that the surest way to leave her to happiness was to inflict upon her what he knew would be a severe present misery. It is not every young lover who would have the resolution to attempt such an undertaking.

"Yes," he reflected, as he ascended the steps, "I will render myself despicable in her eyes; and, when I see she despises me, I will leave her and these scenes for ever."

And, amid gay voices and happy smiles, the forms of the careless crowd pressing by him in their pursuit of pleasure, and the music from the distant ballroom already floating on the air, with Mrs. Digby on one side of him and Mary on the other, he entered the saloons of Monsieur de B——.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE growing passion between Claude and Ida had not been unobserved. Lovers are like the ostrich, who, when his head is under the bush, thinks himself unseen. The report that Mr. Wyndham was engaged to Mary Digby had at first arisen naturally from the circumstances; had been strengthened by Elkington and his mother, at first, from a mere malicious desire to injure him in the fashionable world, where the strange intrusion of Mr. and Mrs. Digby had been the occasion of much merriment. His own conduct, as Madame Wharton remarked, had, however, unintentionally confirmed the idea. In his frequent intercourse with the Carolans he had soon become an object of close attention to more persons than one. Madame Wharton had watched him with various emotions, such as a good

spirit might feel in beholding from the heavens the course of a beloved friend over this dangerous earth. Lady Beverly had fixed her eyes on him, as a malignant being waiting an occasion to injure or ruin him. Among her stronger influences was that of envy. She was so weakly bound up in her son as to be almost blind to his moral worthlessness; and she regarded with disgust the elegance of Claude's person, and the superior intelligence and grace of his mind and manners; and she could not but see that there was "a daily beauty" in his life and character, in the presence of which Elkington appeared to the greatest disadvantage. Other thoughts, of a much deeper and darker nature, there were, half-floating in her mind, which deepened her dislike of Claude into serious apprehension and hatred. As for Elkington, although he commenced by slighting and despising Claude as a man of no fortune, rank, or fashionable pretension—as a mere stranger, whose sphere of life was sufficiently indicated by his intimacy with the Digbys, he found, upon a nearer contact, something about his rival which, while it rendered him less insignificant, also rendered him more hateful in his eyes. The unconscious delicacy and warmth of his manner towards Ida, he perceived, was met on her part by a congeniality which he himself had never excited in this young person; and as the match was, he well knew, one of mere convenience, he at first feared, and then felt, that the love which he had failed to inspire was bestowed, although unacknowledged, and perhaps unknown by either party, upon Claude. The quiet contempt with which his rudeness had been returned by the latter, the sentiment of inferiority which he could not help being conscious of in his presence, and the arts of his mother, who, for reasons of her own, desired to widen the breach between them, even to any extremity, all nourished in his bosom a hatred which grew with every day, and was by no

means abated by his rival's success in society, where, from his own merit and obvious superiority, he was received with the liveliest welcome. Both he and his mother had made secret attempts to find out something definite respecting his family and history which might be used to his disadvantage, and had thus far been partially successful. By certain means they had discovered the mystery which involved his birth. This was openly hinted in every company, in a way calculated to cast suspicion on him. The occurrence already related between Digby and Elkington suggested to the latter a new mode of gratifying his resentment. He had dropped Digby in the affair, and was determined to provoke Claude to a challenge by the most open and insulting statements respecting him. Several persons had mentioned them to Claude, but he persisted in the determination not to call his slanderer to account. This refusal to fight was carefully revealed to all the society, accompanied by every term of exaggeration and contempt, and hence arose the reports to which Madame Wharton had alluded, that he was an adventurer, without even the pecuniary means to support the life he was leading, or the courage to resent the most unequivocal insult. It was said that he had come to Berlin only on a speculation of marriage, and that the letter from Lord Perceval had been forged. These calumnies were so openly spread by Elkington that they were generally believed. The very height at which Claude had stood in society—the admiration with which he had been received—a certain air of nobleness and independence which marked his manner and conversation, and the favour of the Carolans, were all against him. Envy chooses the fairest victim, and slander loves a shining mark. It is astonishing with what facility the world at large grasps at the vaguest calumny against those who have appeared superior, and how instantly a whis-

per against an innocent woman is hatched into a tale of guilt, or a hint of evil is caught and bandied about when directed against an obviously honest man. But poor Claude—who had lived, since his arrival in Berlin, in a kind of enchantment, spellbound by the side of Ida, welcomed in circles which may become dangerously attractive to persons of his lively temperament, and lingering amid scenes of wealth, rank, and love, so magnificent and fair, that it seemed as if he stood by the open gate of Paradise, where a word from the lips of Ida might establish him for ever—poor Claude had not such obvious evidences of his standing and character as to put a stop to the allegations against him. After the first impression, caused by lies, as to his powers as a man of superior mind and education, had subsided, people began to wonder that they did not find out who and what he was. Since Carolan had been made to comprehend that there was danger in his society to Ida, he had, without inquiry or discrimination, resolved at once to consider him as an enemy, and, as such, to speak of and treat him. This had a most injurious effect upon him, as the withdrawal from him of the first patron who had introduced him into society could not but be received as a confirmation of the unfavourable rumours current respecting him.

In the game of whist there occur periods when one finds every chance obstinately against him. Fortune seems not only accidentally capricious, but malignant; and the best player is beaten, not by the skill of his adversary, but by an unseen power in the air. How often is it thus in the more important game of human life? The poor mortal finds his utmost exertions vain, and contends against unfriendly influences, which mock his wisest efforts, and turn them against himself. It seemed now thus with Claude; he was placed in a most painful position. *Principle* called upon him to make sacrifices almost beyond his strength. First, to turn

from the person he loved, and even to behold her about to despise him, without making an effort against it; and then to repel a direct charge against his character only with the mild weapons of explanation and forbearance. How little did they know him who suspected him of cowardice! It would have been a relief to call into the field the insolent calumniator who had so often insulted him by his manner, and was now endeavouring to complete his destruction. In his present state of mind, death would not have been unwelcome; but he felt that the ball which laid low the slanderer of his honour would not clear his name; nor did he, the moment he reflected, really wish to take the blood even of Elkington. His thoughtful mind recoiled from the image of a fellow-creature stretched in death by his hand, and his very conviction of the profligacy of Elkington rendered him averse to send him, "with all his imperfections on his head," into the presence of his God. Whatever might be the temptation or the consequences, a long cherished habit of implicit submission to the dictates of reason and duty, an innate delicacy and magnanimity, and a profound piety, made him firm in the resolution to go through life without imbruing his hands in human blood, or without consenting to offer his own to blind error or profligate passion. Where he *knew* he was pursuing the course of duty, no earthly consequences could make him shrink.

"I have sacrificed my *love* to a sense of right," said he; "shall I not sacrifice my *hate*? And does my reputation demand that I shall kill or be killed? Will the death of Elkington prove my honesty—my fortune—my claims to respect? Will it even clear my name? Will it not, on the contrary, consign it to infamy, and deprive me of the opportunity of disproving by my actions the aspersions against it?"

He therefore determined to persevere in his course—to pass the slanders of Elkington without

other notice than an offer of such proofs of his real character as were necessary, to Count Carolan or any other friend or friends—to avoid being drawn into a quarrel with his enemy—to disentangle himself as imperceptibly, but as completely as possible, from the sweet ties which were beginning to exist between him and Ida, and then to withdraw himself from the scene of so much trouble. He scarcely knew how difficult was his task.

On entering the apartments of Monsieur de B—— with Mrs. Digby and Mary, he perceived immediately that he was an object of attention; nor did it require many moments to discover that this attention was not of the flattering kind to which he had been accustomed. Slander had done its work, and of all those who had been till now so affable and friendly, scarcely one recognised him without a coolness which formed an obvious contrast to their usual manner. Inexperienced in life, although he had heard of calumny, he was not really acquainted with it. He had not thought of its effects. In paying his addresses to Monsieur and Madame de B——, he fancied he saw in both a change not to be mistaken. Madame de B—— was a beautiful but proud woman, careful of her smiles, and disciplined even in the art of directing her *looks* only according to the fashionable worth of the object. She was an interesting and delightful companion among her friends—Claude himself had, till now, been her peculiar favourite—but her eye, as she coldly returned his greeting without encountering his, was cast down, and immediately lifted to a person behind him, with whom she entered into a sudden conversation. Although this was apparently accidental, Claude felt it was a manner of avoiding him. The reception extended to Mrs. Digby and her daughter was equally cold.

Monsieur de B—— bowed slightly to each of the three, and extended his hand to a gentleman who

passed before Claude. He felt the blood mounting to his temple. It was his first impulse to turn on his heel, and never again to enter this or any other Berlin mansion; but he checked these hasty emotions with a calmer pride, and the independence belonging to his character. He reflected that he did not know how far this slander was credited—that perhaps the manner of Monsieur de B—— and his lady might have been accidental—that flight would countenance the falsehoods respecting him—that he had resolved not to seek, but also not to avoid Elkington—that he had a duty to perform towards Ida—and—for he was in the habit of thinking of others as well as himself—he had brought Mrs. Digby and Mary, and they would not wish to be abandoned. He resolved, therefore, to remain. He felt also that his high spirit would meet the incivility of the whole assembly, if necessary, without shrinking, conscious as he was that he did not deserve it.

As he turned he found himself next to Carolan. If the scarce perceptible change in the manner of Monsieur and Madame de B—— and several others had surprised him, he was much more struck with that in the demeanour of Carolan. All the bland suavity of that gentleman had disappeared. It was scarcely possible to recognise him. His figure was drawn up with an ostentatious hauteur on seeing Claude, which left no doubt of his changed sentiments. His manner was stiff and pompous, his nose elevated in the air, and his features expressive of self-satisfaction, superciliousness, and contempt. The instant Claude's eye fell on him, he perceived that his polite and agreeable friend was no more; but that the folly of his character, now brought out by circumstances, had left in his place a very different person. He scarcely knew whether to address him or not; but, as he had yet received no cause to withhold from him the ordinary courtesies of society, he bowed as usual. The count looked him full

in the face without offering the least sign of recognition. A slight laugh at his shoulder caused Claude to turn ; he found that it proceeded from Elkington. At his side was the Countess Carolan. Calmly, but proudly, Claude bowed to her. It seemed that he required from each one the evidence that they could so wantonly insult him before he could believe it. His dignity and manly composure carried a kind of conviction to the heart of the Countess Carolan. She believed in that instant that he was calumniated, and she bowed to him with her usual kindness, and held out her hand. There is something of intuitive perception in the eye of a sweet woman, which, in such matters, reaches the truth through the darkest clouds. Gratitude was one of the strongest sentiments of Claude's soul, and it was expressed in his countenance, as he took her hand and returned her salutation. The change in his expression, from haughty scorn to sincere pleasure, was not lost upon her, and a perceptible moisture in her eye betrayed the feeling with which she sympathized with him in this, the most trying moment of his life. At a little distance stood Ida. She was very pale, and turned away her face as she perceived that his eyes were directed towards her ; but, as if unable to complete the effort, she looked back once again, and that look glanced to his heart, and thrilled him with an unutterable delight, which was instantly quenched in anguish as he remembered what he had undertaken to do.

At this moment Thomson came up. This young man had been so violently his friend as to have even annoyed him with attentions. He had perceived long ago the enmity growing between him and Elkington, and had spoken to him in the strongest terms of disgust of Elkington's character and insolence. Claude, ill read in human nature, held out his hand to him as one of whose support in the hour of need he was secure ; but, to his surprise and embarrass-

ment, the young man passed his extended hand unnoticed, and, seizing that of Elkington, shook it heartily, with many expressions of pleasure at seeing him. A few moments afterward he saw him taking Elkington's cup to carry it to a table, and ordering a servant to bring his lordship more tea.

"And is this human nature?" thought Claude to himself, as he quietly regarded the young sycophant, and remembered the importunity with which he had besieged him in a happier hour, and particularly the expressions of contempt and disgust which he had made use of to him concerning this very Elkington, whom he was now serving with the assiduity of a valet.

It was plain that a total change had taken place in the general opinion respecting the once admired Mr. Wyndham. Nearly all chilled him by the coldness of their manner. Some, although gazing through their glasses, found him as invisible as they had found Digby. A few addressed him without apparent knowledge of what was going on; and two or three made it a point to come up to him, to speak with him long and familiarly, and, by more than usual kindness, seemed desirous of soothing his feelings, of counteracting the effect of the conduct of the rest, and of showing him that they gave no credit to the calumnies in circulation. He remarked that these persons were generally those who had been the least forward to make his acquaintance when he was in the meridian of favour. They were the sensible, the amiable, and the truly virtuous, of whom Providence has scattered a few through the world, like flowers in a field, and who, like flowers, often bloom unseen in retired places, never courting the public gaze, and blessing with their odorous breath and perfect beauty only those who have the fortune to find and the heart to appreciate them. Others there were who—probably absorbed in more important subjects, mere specta-

tors of these scenes, where they came to divert themselves from abstruse labours, and to make their observations upon the world—met him exactly as usual; one gentleman, a tall, noble-looking officer, came up to him, and, giving his hand, said,

“Mr. Wyndham, without ceremony, I make myself acquainted with you. I am General St. Hillaire. I have heard certain calumnies respecting you, which, by Madame Wharton, an old friend of mine, I am taught to believe totally unfounded. I learn also that you have had, from principle, the magnanimity to refuse sending a challenge, and to leave a slanderer to the contempt he merits. Sir, I honour you for it. I wish other young men had your firmness; although I have had no token of your courage, I do not suspect you of cowardice, because a coward in your situation would either fight or fly. I shall esteem myself honoured if you will permit me to cultivate your acquaintance.”

“I assure you, Monsieur le General,” said Claude, “your words give strength to a resolution which almost fails; but the approbation of *one* like you would more than sustain me against the insults of a thousand fools. It is such as you, sir, who give morality a stamp, and prevent honest men from being put out of countenance. I am aware that slander has been busy with my name, and that I am not approved in declining a duel, although I do so in obedience to a principle which, right or wrong, I have adopted. As for other matters, I owe it to your generous confidence to assure you, that I have never been guilty of an action or a thought which should bring a blush to my cheek, and I am ready to give such explanation respecting the points in dispute as a natural curiosity may require or justice demand.”

“I require no proofs,” said General St. Hillaire. “Madame Wharton has assured me that she knows you—that is enough—and I only require to see you

to understand that she is right. I believe I have had the honour of exchanging-cards with you before, but not of meeting you. That is a pleasure which, however, I promise myself soon again."

They were interrupted by the chambellan of the Prince ——, who addressed to the general a few words, and then conducted him to his royal highness. After some moments' conversation, during which Claude could not help remarking the frank dignity of General St. Hillaire's address to the prince, and the easy and friendly familiarity with which he was received by that distinguished person, the general once more returned, and, taking Claude by the arm, led him forward, and the chambellan presented him.

Although astonished at this unexpected proceeding, Claude was pleased with an opportunity of receiving such a compliment after the cold stiffness perceptible in the manner of every one else. His royal highness spoke of various subjects. His remarks were lively and affable, and Claude replied to them with a frankness which seemed to give pleasure. The interview was prolonged beyond the usual time generally allotted to similar conversations; and, when the prince bowed at the conclusion, and General St. Hillaire led him away, Claude saw a new change in the demeanour of the company. Several ventured so far as to say "Bon soir." A gentleman "*très repandu*," who had looked him full in the face several times before, without being able to see any one there, although availing himself of his glass, now came to him from across the room with, "Eh bien, mon chère; comment ça va-t-il?" while even Thomson, with several irresistible salutations, remarked that "it was horribly hot!" a proposition innocent in itself, and so extremely true that Claude did not offer any denial.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE prince had left the room, and Claude was preparing to do the same with General St. Hillaire, whose determination to support him appeared evident to everybody. They had reached a small cabinet in which were only one or two persons, when he was not a little surprised by a bland "good-evening, Mr. Wyndham," from the lips of Lady Beverly. This was almost the first time that lady had ever deigned to extend towards him any civility. Both he and the general stopped. He replied coolly, but politely.

"Are we going to lose you?" said she, in her mildest tone. "I have heard that it is your intention to continue your tour?"

"I have not made any definite decision, madam," said Claude.

"You have been quite a traveller, I believe?"

Surprised at the friendly familiarity with which she spoke, and wondering what it could mean, he replied that "he had lived much abroad."

"You are an Englishman?"

"Certainly, madam."

"But you have lived mostly on the Continent?"

"In France."

"Paris?"

"Yes, madam."

He reddened perceptibly at the pertinacity of these inquiries upon a subject on which he felt an extreme sensibility, and which he had confided to no human being in Berlin. Her questions, from which he could not retreat, appeared to possess the formality and imperativeness of a cross-examination before a legal tribunal, and several by-standers had drawn nearer and fixed their attention upon him. Among them were Elkington, Carolan, and the countess,

Ida, Beaufort, and Thomson. The circle seemed to open and enclose him as she continued her interrogatories with a smile which had mischief in it.

"Were you not last from London, Mr. Wyndham?" resumed Lady Beverly.

"I was."

"I fear you will think me very inquisitive; but I have the pleasure of knowing some of your friends in England. Your father, I think."

"It is probable—that is—I am quite unable to say," said Claude, with an embarrassment so obvious as to be perceived by everybody. He now saw that this singular and bad woman had a design in pursuing him, and that several of those around were probably aware of it. The Countess Carolan regarded him with a calm gravity; Carolan stood stiff and proud, with his nose in the air. General St. Hillaire looked surprised, and Lady Beverly's face was lighted with the delight of a tigress about to spring upon her prey. Ida, a little retired, bent her eyes upon him with an anguish and tenderness which sunk into his soul. She had not yet learned the art of disguising the emotions of her heart.

"The Wyndhams are from Devonshire, I believe?"

Claude was silent.

"I think I met your father, General Wyndham. He was General Wyndham—was he not?"

"No, madam—that is—he is not living—that is—that I know of."

"But your mother?"

He had never so completely lost his self-possession. He was aware that these questions did not originate in mere curiosity, but were obviously put by one who knew, by whatever means, that they could not be readily answered. The surprise with which he discovered this cool and deliberate intention to pursue and injure him, and the difficulty which he had in conjecturing what could be the cause and origin of such a course, added to his di-

lemma. He could neither retreat, nor answer, nor decline answering, without affording the desired triumph to his malignant and mysterious enemy; and the consciousness that the eyes of all around were fixed upon him, and that even they who were most his friends regarded his hesitation with astonishment, if not suspicion, did not increase his presence of mind. He cast a glance around, and beheld each countenance expressive of their various sentiments, and his head absolutely turned dizzy when a low laugh was heard from Elkington, and Lady Beverly continued,

“Pray, Mr. Wyndham, if not General Wyndham, what *was* your father’s name? I am sure I have met him somewhere.”

There was a moment’s silence, and a laugh was once more heard from Elkington, while Ida’s countenance showed all the anguish and sympathy of her soul. The sight of it restored him to himself, and, ashamed of his weakness, he replied calmly,

“Madam, you must not be surprised if, under an examination so searching and unexpected, I have betrayed the embarrassment and distress which misfortune must ever suffer on being made the object of public attention. It was not my wish to relate to strangers the secrets of my family; but truth is better than any equivocation; and it may gratify your curiosity to learn that I am a poor orphan, thrown upon the world by a chance which I cannot explain with clearness, nor think of without pain. The name I bear was the gift of a stranger, and the face of father or mother I never saw. But, isolated as that name is from all that cheers the life of other men, it has never been allied to wrong, or sullied, madam, by dishonour!”

An expression of admiration broke from the lips of several at the dignity of this reply, full of composure and conscious innocence.

“Do you mean to insult my mother?” said Elkington, advancing close to him.

The flashing eyes of Claude fell upon him, but did not intimidate him. St. Hillaire withdrew Claude into the corner of the cabinet.

Elkington, following them, approached, and, in such a whisper as only Claude and his new friend could hear, said,

“You are a scoundrel, sir!”

The general frowned. Claude calmly replied,

“If your own actions, my lord, proved you to possess a judgment sound enough to form just opinions, or a character pure enough to give them any importance, I should feel more regret in knowing what you think of me; as it is—”

“Well,” said Elkington, his face growing red, and his whole frame trembling with a passion which he could not control, “as it is—”

“I consider the terms in which they are expressed a sufficient indication of the person who utters them, and of the attention they deserve.”

This short dialogue had taken place in so private a manner as to elude the observation of every one but General St. Hillaire, to change whose opinion of Claude it was probably intended; but several persons now approaching, Elkington only remarked in a low tone, and with more self-command,

“At a proper time I shall request an explanation of your remark,” and withdrew.

“Well, this is certainly an odd scene,” said the general. “I don’t know the circumstances of the affair; but I see yonder fellow is a puppy and a blockhead, and the mother is malice itself.”

Madame Wharton here came up. She was extremely agitated, and held out her hand with an emotion which might have been easily accounted for by the accident which just passed.

The music and dancing were going on all the time, and the feelings which had been awakened in more than one bosom were not visible upon the surface of the glittering society.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GENERAL ST. HILLAIRE was now called from the side of Claude, and the latter, surrounded by so many prying and unfriendly eyes, was thinking of withdrawing from a scene where so little attraction awaited him, when Miss Digby complained of faintness, and Claude offered to lead her out. She desired, however, that he should conduct her into the boudoir of Madame de B——. He accordingly led her to this distant room. It was a beautiful apartment, entirely lighted with massive lamps, whose beams, falling through thick shades and screens, shed a light as soft and pale as that of the moon. In one corner was a kind of bower, half buried under vines, which crept luxuriantly over a light trellis-work, and was surrounded by large jars and vases of shrubs and flowers. The walls were hung with damask satin of dark crimson, and adorned with paintings of the best masters. The tables were piled with magnificently-bound books and engravings, writing materials, shells, pearl, portfolios, figures in bronze, ivory, and gold, of exquisite workmanship; statues of white marble stood in the corners, and leaned from pedestals and cornices. In the centre of this odour-breathing retreat, where the fresh incense of a garden and the sylvan recesses of a forest were brought, by the hand of taste, into a lady's boudoir, was a colossal vase of porcelain, from which rose a broad-leaved plant full of blossoms, of which some had fallen and lay scattered upon the thick carpet.

These charming apartments—soft, shadowy, silent—are cool and delightful retreats from the glare and noise of the ballroom and the movement of the crowd. It happened that, at the moment when

Claude led in his pretty young charge, no one was there. He supported her to a sofa, and would have gone immediately in search of her mother, but she grew so pale, and was so evidently about to faint, that he could not quit her.

"It is the heat," said Claude.

"No, no—the dreadful scene—Lord Elkington. I fear—he is so rash—so brave—"

"Lord Elkington?"

"Oh, yes—he is so extremely brave—I am quite afraid—I assure you! If anything should happen to him—if you—"

"Fear nothing for Lord Elkington," said Claude, not without observing, more than usual, the weakness of this young girl's mind.

"Promise me, then—promise me," said she, "that, if you fight—you won't fire at him."

"Upon my word, I will not," said Claude, smiling.

"Oh, dear Mr. Wyndham," said she, seizing his hand and raising it to her lips, "you give me new life. Lord Elkington is so extremely brave. Do you know he has killed two men already in a duel?"

"Two men!"

"Yes—he is such a *very* charming person. You know he would have killed papa if it had not been for—for—"

"And you find that so charming!"

"Oh, you know papa is so passionate—and he was so rude to him—but you won't positively hurt him?"

"I have no such intention, certainly," said Claude.

"Oh, thank you," she said again, seizing his hand once more and pressing it to her lips. "I am so much obliged to you—I shall never, never forget—Ah! some one comes."

She rose with a quickness which proved that her strength had quite returned with the dissipation of her fears for the "charming Lord Elkington," and she disappeared in a moment. The person who

had thus frightened her away was Ida. She could not help seeing Claude, and the manner in which he was engaged, as his hand was still in Mary's when she entered. At first she hastily retreated, but, on the withdrawal of Miss Digby, as if influenced by a sudden thought, she returned. Her manner was calm, but she was evidently agitated.

The sight of this young girl, thus alone with him, and probably for the last time; the idea that he was soon to leave her for ever, and with an opinion which could not be other than contemptuous of his conduct and character, and the coincidence by which he had been thus discovered with Miss Digby, all threw Claude once more into an embarrassment. These new situations, he found, were too much for his composure, they came upon him so unexpectedly and in such quick succession. The return of Ida to his side when she saw he was alone, was at once so far beyond his hopes and fears, that he knew not what inference to draw from it, nor how to act. It appeared as if his guardian angel had thrown in his way an opportunity, if not to declare his sentiments, and request from the girl he so tenderly loved to abandon her brilliant but unhappy position, and tread the path of life with him, at least to bid her farewell in a manner in some degree corresponding with his anguish and his sacrifice; but the formal promise he had given Madame Wharton was not an instant absent from his memory; and with a firm effort of self-command, and a secret prayer for aid to that Power which sustains all who earnestly desire it, he determined to guard every word and look with conscientious care. For a moment both seemed at a loss how to commence the conversation, whether in the careless gayety of the ballroom, or in a tone more suitable to the thoughts which filled both their minds. At length Ida, with a dignity which surpassed all that he could imagine of what should be her demeanour on such an occasion, a

modesty as of an angel suffusing her cheek with a faint colour, said,

“ I fear Mr. Wyndham will scarcely forgive me for the liberty of intruding into his affairs ; but the scene which has just occurred—the—Lord Elkington—my father—in short, I am alarmed, you may believe, for the result.”

The calmness of her manner, which almost became coldness as she finished, restored Claude in a moment to his usual composure, took from the interview the character of a tender *tête-à-tête*, and placed him at once in the position of a stranger—such as he might have felt himself in on a first meeting. All the audacious tenderness and wild tumult of his soul fell beneath the modest firmness of this young girl ; all the idea that she had ever loved him disappeared from his mind. He stood before her, less a lover by his mistress than a subject before his queen ; and, although those two hearts were so deeply touched with each other, and each felt secretly all the tender ardour of love, yet—thus alone, unwatched, under circumstances so interesting—perhaps meeting for the last time on earth, and about to separate in anger—so pure was the conscientiousness which both put into their duty, so well-disciplined and self-governed were their minds, that their demeanour towards each other was as distant and as guarded as if Madame Wharton or Count Carolan had been observing them.

“ If you allude to the safety of Lord Elkington—” said Claude.

There was a moment's pause, which Ida did not interrupt.

“ I can assure you, my intentions are—”

“ But my object in availing myself of this chance opportunity to see you alone, was to inform you frankly what I have understood ; that it is Lord Elkington's determination to offer you some farther public insult, till he drives you into a quarrel.”

"And can you—" Claude began, but recollected himself.

"You will not wonder that I should feel anxious for him," said Ida.

"I cannot imagine what farther insult his lordship can offer me, but a multiplication of terms which mean nothing, and but meant—"

He paused again, remembering that he was speaking of her destined husband.

"In these extreme cases," continued Ida, with a slight change of colour, "I find perfect frankness the best course, and I therefore add, the happiness of all of us demands that you avoid Lord Elkington. He is so resolute, so determined. His principles on this point are so unalterable, that—"

"Is it your opinion that I should fly from this persecution?"

"Yes; immediately and for ever!" She spoke with eagerness.

"But—"

"I understand that you have expressly declined to call out Lord Elkington, as he has expected. Why subject yourself to farther annoyance? You are a stranger in Berlin. You have never been here before. You may never visit it again. My father is alienated from you by Lord Elkington, and you will leave none here whom you will ever regret or remember."

Claude's heart stood silent as if life was suspended, and a thrill ran through his whole frame. So beautiful did she look thus before him—the changing of her feelings were reflected so clearly on her transparent complexion and mobile features—the idea that she required but a word from his lips, but a glance from his eyes, to requite the deep love which he at this moment felt for her more forcibly than ever, nearly caused him to forget his resolution, and to declare to her all the agitation and tenderness of his soul. He perceived even, as Madame Wharton

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had stated, that she was ignorant of his love for her; that her innocence and artlessness had seen in his manner only the partiality of a friend; and that his appearance at Monsieur de B——'s with Mary Digby, and the interview in which she had found him engaged with that young lady, had completely confirmed her in the belief of what Elkington had told her respecting his intended marriage. If she was ignorant of his love, she was almost as much so of her own; and she fully believed that the interest she took in him was but the result of a natural admiration of his character—was but a true friendship, and so, perhaps, it was; for in one so pure, delicate, and modest, love itself was only friendship until the object of it should teach her its more sacred name.

“Let me be your *friend*, Mr. Wyndham,” said she, with a faint smile; “I believe I can advise you, and, if your own happiness cannot influence you, let that of another.”

“Another!” said Claude, forgetting in a moment all but the inference which, for an instant, he drew from her words.

“Yes, the interesting and lovely girl, who suffers more than yourself from these painful quarrels. She nearly fainted on seeing your momentary interview just now with Lord Elkington; go, Mr. Wyndham! and believe me, your character is too well understood to suffer more than a temporary shadow from all that error or unkindness may breathe against it.”

What would Claude have then given to inform her that it was for *Elkington* that Miss Digby had betrayed so much tender solicitude—that she was a silly girl in whom he had not the slightest interest—and that, in leaving her, he was tearing himself from peace of mind for ever. He, however, made no reply; and the music of the distant ballroom now ceasing for a moment, several persons strolled into the boudoir.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON returning that night to his lodgings, Claude found a letter from Denham. By a mischance it had miscarried, it having been committed to the hand of a gentleman who, on leaving London, had intended to come directly to Berlin, but who had so altered his *route* as to avoid visiting that city. The letter reached Claude at last by the post from Vienna. It was in reply to the one written in the commencement of the winter, requesting information respecting Elkington. It threw a new aspect over Claude's affairs.

"As for Elkington," thus the letter proceeds, "by a peculiar chance I have been made acquainted with some circumstances concerning him which ought to be communicated to Count Carolan, and which I beg you to do on my behalf, if you are reluctant to do it on your own. You may then tell Count Carolan that, if I had a daughter, a sister, or a young female friend in the greatest destitution, I should rather see her perish from the effects of want, than to see her the wife of Lord Elkington. His father, the Earl of Beverly, will scarcely admit him into his presence, although he has but a partial knowledge of his vices. He is a desperate gambler, and there is a circumstance which happened between him, two other gentlemen, and myself, which enables me to assure you he is a cheat at cards. The cards were sealed when he left the table, and examined the next morning. It was clear, to the satisfaction of all present, that he had marked them. We taxed him with it. He was at first disposed to fight, and made several attempts; but he had to deal with cool and determined men, and he went abroad, and will probably remain there till the affair has blown over. This immunity was allowed him at the earnest en-

treaties of the Earl of Beverly, who was informed of the affair, and who declared to us, during an interview which we had with him on the subject, that he would disinherit him, if the estates were not entailed to descend to the eldest son. He is also deeply in debt, principally to gamblers and usurers.

“There is yet another circumstance. He won the affections of a young girl, the daughter of a poor officer, and a person of the purest character and extreme loveliness. He only succeeded in obtaining her confidence by a marriage which, I assure you, was a real one, so that this interesting fellow has in reality already a wife. On learning the affair, the father called upon him, and demanded that his daughter should be publicly acknowledged. Elkington evaded him as long as he could; but the father—a high-tempered old man—demanded satisfaction, although his friends advised him to pursue legal measures. Elkington met him, and at the first shot the unhappy father fell. The daughter lost her senses, and is now in a madhouse, where it is probable she will not long survive. They had no money, no friends; and the affair is hushed up, no other notice being taken of it than the usual flip-pant announcement in the newspaper, that ‘an affair of honour had taken place yesterday morning between Lord Elkington and Captain Atwood, which, unfortunately, had a fatal termination; the ball of his lordship, at the first fire, passing through his opponent’s head. We learn that the quarrel originated in some attentions which his lordship had paid to a young lady, a near relative of the deceased. It is said that his lordship went reluctantly into the field, and behaved with great coolness; and that he felt the deepest regret that the choleric rashness of his former friend rendered such a course inevitable. His lordship, it is said, has started on a tour to the Continent.’

“You may tell your friend Count Carolan these

circumstances, and he may give my name, if he pleases, to Elkington, who knows well I do not fear him, and that I have but to open my lips to blast his name. This I would not do, except in a circumstance like that you have informed me of; and where he is about to marry into a family so distinguished and so little acquainted with him, I readily consent to put them on their guard.

“And now, having disposed of the profligate of whom you inquire, let me add a few words respecting myself. Since you left London I have become a married man. You know the young lady; she has no rank nor fortune, but she is all beauty and sweetness, and looks up to me with respect and gratitude, as well as affection. She has nothing on earth. Her father is a poor clergyman—one of the best and most delightful of men. He has given her a perfect education. You know I have no property but the life annuity bequeathed to me by my eccentric uncle, who hated the marriage state so much, because he happened to be afflicted with a bad wife himself, that he wished, by this manner of bequeathing his fortune, to discourage me from forming any matrimonial alliance. I am worth, therefore, £1000 a year till the day of my death, when my beloved wife, and whatever family Providence may bless us with, will be left with only the amount of savings which we can put by from our current expenses. Notwithstanding these inducements to economy, we are coming abroad in the spring, and we mean to take Berlin in our way.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

CLAUDE read with various emotions this account of Elkington's character, and the more so, as it coincided with the estimation he had formed of him. Yet he could not, under the circumstances which he

found himself, reveal it to Carolan without subjecting himself to the imputation of an interested motive. Perhaps it would be deemed a mere slander upon a successful rival, who had openly insulted him, and whom he dared not meet in the field. Madame Wharton rose to his memory; but sending the letter to her would be in fact the same as sending it to the count. What if he gave it to Ida? But the objections to this at once presented themselves. With what propriety could he secretly dissuade the daughter from marrying a man selected by her family—even did he, in the eyes of that family, stand himself less in the attitude of a rejected lover? What if he should not interfere at all in the matter? There seemed an indelicacy in any interference; and Count Carolan was not a man of sense, but of prejudices so fixed and conceit so strong, that it was not certain he would listen to any proof, and perhaps he would insult him who should presume to offer any. Yet with what propriety could he, from a false idea of delicacy, keep concealed a secret which affected the happiness of Ida, and which might materially change the intentions of her family? Would it not, in fact, be a favour to any one thus situated, to inform them of circumstances so well authenticated, and in which they were so much interested? Would it not look even as cowardly to withhold, as it might appear base to reveal it? He thought of an anonymous letter, but his manly frankness instantly rejected the idea. Anonymous writers rarely receive attention, and still more rarely deserve it. A middle course presented itself, *viz.*, to enclose the letter to Count Carolan, with permission, if he pleased, to state to Lord Elkington *who* had communicated the facts in question. He instantly addressed the following note to Carolan:

“MONSIEUR LE COMTE :

“I am on the eve of leaving Berlin, where I shall

probably never return again. It is possible that you may misinterpret the motives with which I send you the enclosed letter. I received it from a person of trust, and can vouch for its truth. Mr. Denham, as you will perceive, offers his name also; but I beg you to withhold it from Lord Elkington, as I am willing, should there be any serious responsibility, to take it upon myself. My sole object is to put you in possession of facts which affect the interests of your family. You are at liberty to state that you received them *from me*; for, while I have nothing to hope from your decision, I have nothing to fear from Lord Elkington's resentment. If any passing weakness has ever caused me to seem to swerve from the path which I ought to pursue in relation to yourself and everything connected with you, that weakness is at an end. If I have ceased, as with pain I perceive I have, to receive your esteem, I hope I have not ceased to deserve it.

"I am, etc., etc."

He sealed and instantly despatched this note by Carl, telling him to deliver it to Count Carolan, and *only* into his own hand.

It was now late at night. He was too much excited by the circumstances of the evening to sleep. Indeed, he felt a sense of heated and painful wakefulness. He then opened the window. It was a calm and pleasant night, and he determined to walk forth to indulge in the reflections to which his singular position gave rise.

"I will quit this place," he thought, as he wandered slowly up the *Linden* towards the *Brandenburg gate*. "I will quit this spot for ever. It has been fatal to my peace—almost to my honour. I will wait the answer of this letter to Carolan, and then turn my back on this proud portal—on these thoughtless crowds—who believe so readily slander from the lips of a scoundrel—and who look

coldly on a man because he refuses to shed his fellow-creature's blood, or to pour out his own at the call of every rash fool or designing villain. I am what I am."

The evening seemed to grow softer and brighter as he advanced. The sky had at first been dashed over with small white clouds disposed in airy waves, a sea rippled by a summer breeze, through which the moon steadily and peacefully held her course, even as an unswerving and patient mind pursues the path appointed by Heaven. As he walked on, these fleecy shapes broke silently apart, gentle as thought, and, like it, mingling and separating with a noiseless motion, till, dissolved into torn fragments, like the vanishing doubts of a pure and settled mind, they at length disappeared entirely, and left the void all stainless and still—its fathomless extent glittering with those wonderful systems which God has hung before our eyes—a revelation of his immensity, benevolence, and power.

"It is virtue," thought he; "it is truth. What an emblem! what a lesson! God spreads it above our heads to teach us to look up! to raise our eyes from the earth, whose magnificence and grandeur are so infinitely surpassed, that we may daily view it and nightly study it. It shadows forth not only what *he* is, but what *we* may be, trusting to him, and lifting our eyes above the earth!"

These and similar contemplations tranquillized his soul, and seemed to establish between him and his Maker a kind of communion, which made his approbation far more necessary than all the uncertain and useless applause of the world; useless, at least, unless bestowed upon what is right.

He wandered on and on, till he presently found himself before the palace of Count Carolan. He paused to look on it thus in the silence of night. The moonbeams fell across its yellow and richly-sculptured façade, and tall, closed windows, leaving

one of its heavy wings in the shadow, and glancing across the overhanging buttresses, and the company of statues which stood speechless and stirless upon its eaves and in the court. There is something in a noble edifice which seems touched with human sympathy, and partakes of the character of those who erect and those who inhabit it. Architecture is so full of mind and grandeur, that those stately colonnades and slender columns speak to the soul almost with a language. Claude gazed upon the rooms which he had so often seen blazing with light and animated with gay crowds, upon the silent pavé so often thronged with glittering carriages and trampling horses—now all gone. “So anon,” thought the solitary muser, “will fade from the green earth all that inhabit it, into shadows—into memories of the past.”

Beneath that roof slept Ida. It was possible he might never see her again.

“Farewell,” he said, “lovely and ever beloved. Thou sleepest! Sleep on! Hover over her, ye guardian angels! Shield her from every care! Lead her light step over a summer path. Spring every flower to her beautiful feet. If pain threaten her, send it instead to my heart. Let never that young smile be shaded by a thought of me; and the misery she has inflicted, oh! may she never share—may she never even know!”

In the weakness of the moment, it seemed to him as if he were taking that farewell which he dare not do in reality, and as if this solitary moment were rendered more sacred by a parting which was to separate them for ever. He walked on. His steps were bent almost unconsciously towards the Park; and, passing the Brandenburg gate, its stately form lifted against the glittering heavens, and the magnificent group on its top showing in that soft light as if some goddess had descended, indeed, upon earth, in her airy car, down that star-paved road.

The wood looked lonely and beautiful at that "dead waist and middle of the night;" some parts lying clear and white in the moonlight, and some leading the eye into deep recesses and deserted glades, steeped in black shadows. He entered this lonely spot, which had been the scene of his rash hopes, and which was now the mute witness of his despair.

Claude was one of those strongly acted upon by the various aspects of nature. It was not necessary for him to seek Alpine cliffs, Italian shores, and distant deserts, to thrill beneath the beauty and power which, to those formed to be touched by these divine mysteries, lie ever around, above their heads, and beneath their feet. Where the common mind wanders unstirred, beholding only common things, his finer spirit saw God's footstep and the writing of his hand; and he entered this perfectly-abandoned forest, with its heavy piles of foliage and shadows—its dark aisles—its grassy and flower-enamelled floor—its arched and leafy vaults, and its utterly hushed recesses, with a feeling of solemn delight and awe, which made him move slowly, as over enchanted ground. The trees, as they stood grouped around, to his aroused imagination half seemed a company of unearthly beings, communing with each other in a wordless language, and reaching forth to the earth and to the stars their ancient and appealing arms.

"Who knows," thought our ever-musing wanderer, "but that the spirit of consciousness, which lies in so many forms—which God has shed into matter in such various ways, may lurk in these dim shapes—may flow through their twisted and gently moving limbs—may warm their aged hearts, and sparkle in their outbursting buds and leaves! Why should not the tree feel the breeze that wakes its branches—the tempest that threatens to tear up its 'earth-bound roots?' Who knows but they are spirits watching the ways of men—bending with pity over the pining lover—calmly watching the conqueror's car—sha-

ding the boy at his happy and fleeting sports—or, when life is done, waving over his grave, and knowing more of earth and its mysteries than we its masters? Who can pretend to possess the deep secrets that lie around us?"

There came over his memory recollections of his youthful hours, when it had been his delight to climb into the branches. Ah! they then brought to his careless mind no such dim and fearful thoughts! His heart then saw in the earth around him only the bright colours of happiness and hope; and the wondrous objects now startling him with mysterious meaning and with strange beauty, but half seen before, struck his delighted eye, without printing themselves so solemnly on his soul.

As he proceeded, he came to a spot, the surpassing beauty of which caused him again to pause. A narrow path wound close to the edge of a stream, which here, spreading out into a pretty lake, lay, a moveless sheet of silver light, in which the surrounding objects discovered themselves with perfect distinctness. Behind him was a mass of thick shrubbery. A small bridge crossed the water, and a few seats, now deserted, had been placed around for the convenience of pedestrians. The full moon, riding in her meridian splendour, poured a flood of light upon the scene, reflecting the thick wall of foliage which rose by the water, and leaving the interior recesses in the blackest shadow. Immediately by his side a white-barked tree leaned over the flood, in such a way that the moonbeams, glancing from its white bark, rendered it as brightly visible as a column of silver. Claude stopped beside this tree to admire a night-scene, which, in its soft and simple beauty, seemed disposed for the study of a painter. He leaned over and gazed into the water. A part of the adjoining wood rose tall and clear in that inverted world—each delicate fibre and finely pencilled leaf drawn in lines of soft light—the bridge

hung beneath with wondrous beauty, every bending arch and slender line strangely distinct. There lay the shores leaning back from the edge—there hung the budding foliage and silent flowers, as soft as light itself. There rose the tall trunks glimmering in the radiant air—the tree beside which he stood—his own form and features—and yet deeper, beyond imagination, to infinity, were the blue and bending heavens—the glittering stars—the sleeping clouds—the spotted moon.

“Exquisite! incredible!” broke from his lips. He almost held his breath as he gazed, a sense of unutterable delight filling his heart; when, with a thrill that froze his blood, he saw beneath him, in the starless mirror, a hand—and a dagger glittering in the moonbeams, raised aloft to strike. He had only time to commit himself to God, when a loud shriek rose close behind him, like a voice awakening one struggling with the nightmare. He was instantly drawn back, and staggered against the tree, the reflection of which a few moments before he had been observing in the water. It was a moment ere he quite recovered from the stupor into which this incident had thrown him. On turning, he found himself alone, but the figure of a female at some distance appeared approaching him. As he advanced towards her, he perceived she was breathless and fainting with terror. She sunk upon one of the seats, and, lifting her face, pale with fright, discovered the features of Madame Wharton.

“Thank God!” she exclaimed, as soon as her agitation would permit her to speak. “Oh, let us hasten from this dreadful spot.”

“Madame Wharton!” said Claude, “I am amazed. How came you here—at this extraordinary hour—at a moment so strange?—and where is he who attempted my life?”

“Oh, Mr. Wyndham! what a singular chance!”

“It was your shriek that saved me. I had lost my balance.”

"Merciful Providence! Let us hasten away and call the guard," said Madame Wharton.

"But, madame—you—how came *you* here?—by what extraordinary chance?—I am quite at a loss to conjecture!"

"I will tell you as we proceed; but, for Heaven's sake, do not delay your return. I am painfully alarmed—this is shocking."

"It might have been much worse though," said Claude, smiling.

"But the ruffian may return—"

"Pray be under no apprehension. If he does, I will be more ready for him. He would not fire a pistol so near the town, and with a dagger he cannot do much harm when seen; but I have no words to express my amazement. What *can* this mean? Whom have I offended? What ill have I done to call for such vengeance? I have never had a serious quarrel except with one person; and, much as I despise that person, I really dare not utter his name in connexion with such an affair."

"It is mysterious—it is frightful," said Madame Wharton; "but let us hasten towards the gate. I tremble lest the assassin should return. We must give notice to the guard."

"No," said Claude; "the man by this time is probably long past pursuit, and most likely has entered by some other gate. He would scarcely undertake an affair like this without being prepared for a retreat."

"Had he succeeded, you would have been precipitated into the water. It might have been months—perhaps years—before your fate could be known."

"But pray satisfy my curiosity," said Claude, "for I scarcely find this attempt on my life so extraordinary as your being here so opportunely to save me—and at such an unseasonable hour!"

"I went to your hotel," said Madame Wharton.

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“I had something of importance to inquire of you. I could not come before, and my impatience would not permit me to wait till to-morrow: wishing to see you in secret, I took with me no servant, and I had no idea that I should be less safe about the town in the night than in the day. On inquiring at your hotel, they told me you had gone out. I returned home and was entering the house, when I thought I perceived you at a distance, walking towards the Park. The extreme loveliness of the night seemed to render this place peculiarly appropriate as the scene for the conversation I wished to have with you, and I followed you. On drawing near, I perceived a figure on the shady side of the way moving at some distance behind you, with an air of one watching you—pausing when you paused—advancing when you advanced—stooping and lurking back in the shadow, and hiding behind the nearest object twice when you turned. This strange apparition, dogging your steps with such a stealthy determination, awakened first my curiosity and then my alarm. He skulked after you till you approached and passed through the gate; then pausing a considerable time, he assumed a careless air, and went also through the portal. I followed. For a long time, as you walked, I perceived him skulking after you till you approached the dark grove which ended by the stream. He then hid behind a tree. The moonlight streamed upon the spot where you stood, and, as you leaned over the water, I saw him steal cautiously up. I should have called, but even then I was not sure he might not be one of your acquaintance, practising some merry surprise; till, with a terror which for a moment took from me the power of speech, I saw him dart from the thicket to your side, and something in his hand flashed in the moonlight as he lifted it over your head. My horror scarcely enabled me to utter the shriek which arrested him; when, starting and muttering a deep

oath in English, he passed very near me with great rapidity, and disappeared."

"Did you see his face?"

"I did not."

"And could you at all recognise his form?"

"No. Terror blinded me. I have no distinct impression of his appearance."

"It is certainly very singular—and recalls to me an incident which happened soon after my arrival in Berlin. I was walking also late at night, as I have a custom of doing, and also in the Park, when a strange, coarse-looking man presented himself suddenly at my back as I turned accidentally on hearing the howl of a dog."

"You are, then, the object of an assassin's dagger; you are certainly marked for some one's victim."

"But whose?"

"Alas!" said Claude, with emotion, "I know not. I scarcely care. My life is full of mystery and pain. I have nothing which cheers the existence of other men."

"But," said Madame Wharton, "we are nearly at the gate; and, before we proceed, let me ask you some information respecting your family and situation. A wonderful coincidence has brought you before my eyes; and with you, Mr. Wyndham, such singular associations and vague hopes as make me tremble."

"Associations—with me?" echoed Claude.

"I heard your replies this evening," continued Madame Wharton, "to that odious Lady Beverly. Who this woman is I do not know. But I perceive she has conceived an enmity against you which excites my curiosity. Let me be indeed your friend. Confide in me your whole history. You are strangely misrepresented here now. You stand in the attitude of a suspected person. Very painful statements are going the rounds of the whole society concerning you. Elkington openly avows that you are an impostor and a coward, and has de-

liberately expressed his determination to drive you from Berlin in disgrace. Count Carolan believes him. He says you are here under an assumed name. Your attachment to Ida is beginning to be talked of, and Carolan has declared that you shall never again enter his house. He has solemnly forbidden Ida even to *speak* to or of *you*, under the pain of his lasting displeasure; and he is capable of turning her adrift upon the world for the slightest act of disobedience. What is the origin of these reports?"

"If to be nameless and friendless—if to be without family or resources, except one which chance has given and may withdraw at any moment—if to have loved rashly one whom I knew I could never obtain—and if to feel myself bound by principles of action from which not disgrace itself shall make me swerve, against calling out into the field, and killing or being killed, by the man who makes no secret of his wish to ruin me; if this be guilt, then I am most guilty. If this be cowardice, then I am a coward."

"Who are you, then?" said Madame Wharton, with increasing agitation.

"You are ill," said Claude; "you are exhausted with the terror of this night."

"No. I earnestly entreat you to go on."

"Then, madame, I fear that I *am* the child of guilt; and I fear that, if I *had* a family, I should be more degraded than I am without one. I remember little of my infancy. It passed among strangers. I crossed the ocean in my earliest years to England, where I was placed at a good school, and where subsequently I received an education which I owed to charity. Lord Perceval, the friend I have lately lost, and his estimable lady, some time since deceased, brought me up out of friendship. On leaving the university I received a letter which could only have proceeded from a heart filled with loathing, and directed against one whose existence

it regarded as a misfortune and a shame. It informed me that I was the child of guilt; that only one person on the earth knew who I was, and that person was and ever would be prevented by disgust and horror from owning or seeing me; that I sprung from the lowest, the vilest class of society; that my father was a wretch covered with dishonour, and my mother a—being yet lower; that she had paid the penalty of her crimes—and that, if ever I made an attempt to discover my origin, I should but bring down on my head all the detestation and shame which criminal parents could bequeath to a miserable child. An annuity of £450 was settled on me through a certain banker, on the condition that I should never take measures to find out from whence it came, or anything concerning it. It was to cease instantly upon the first inquiry. I was requested to pass most of my time abroad. I have been compelled thus to live a kind of idle life. I have travelled about the globe, and occupied myself with my own thoughts and observations, and endeavoured to find a recompense for these disadvantages, and to repair, as far as possible, by a stainless life, the woes and guilt of those mysterious persons from whom I drew my being.”

“Have you that letter?”

“It is among the papers of Lord Perceval. I have long made up my mind to pursue the subject no farther. A father who could thus cast me off, and doom me to a life of suspicion—to be branded by every malicious foe with mysteries which I cannot explain—I confess I would not meet if I could, and I should tremble lest, in discovering him, I should but find some unfortunate whose hands are imbrued with blood and crime, and the spoils of whose sin I myself am perhaps sharing. My curiosity to unravel these secrets—to know what sin my mother has committed, and what was the manner in which she expiated it—this curiosity is quenched by the

misgivings to which it gives rise. Oh, my mother! if your shade hovers in the air, or pines in hopeless woe for a life of crime, cannot the sacrifices of your unhappy son soften your anguish or sooth your remorse? And oh, my father! if your dark eyes follow the course of him whom you have thus so long cast off, are there no moments when nature pleads in a heart hardened only by chance, and you behold through tears of affection one who obeys and loves, even when he trembles at the thought of you?"

"Have you no knowledge of your real name?"

"None. A complete mystery enshrouds it. Often, when I read of the execution of some female, I shudder lest it might be the being who gave me birth; often, when I hear of some criminal, I wonder whether a father's heart be not bursting in that death-doomed form."

"Horrible thought!" said Madame Wharton.

"I am encircled by awful mysteries," said Claude. "I feel as if borne by destiny along a dark tide, I know not whither."

"It is dark indeed," said Madame Wharton. "I am as bewildered as yourself. There are strange things in life—and wild—which sometimes hover around the paths of mortals—and which are never dreamed of by others."

"But come," said Claude, "I have been excited and weak. I do not allow myself often to give way to these thoughts. Perhaps my imaginations and apprehensions are equally unfounded. There is a bright side as well as a dark to my fate; but will you allow me to ask, madame, what object *you* have in pursuing these inquiries?"

"Because I am *your friend*," said Madame Wharton, in a low and tremulous tone; and she held out her hand. He pressed it to his lips.

"You are," said he, "the only one on earth who takes an interest in my lonely fate, and I thank you."

“Promise me, then,” said Madame Wharton, “to be guided by me. Do not yield to the temptations which Elkington will throw in the way of your passion, and to Ida—be as a stranger. The path of right is sometimes steep and dreary, but leads to true happiness.”

“I have promised,” said Claude. He felt that he yielded to her influence as a mortal to a superior being, sent thus by Heaven to save his life in the moment of peril, and to support his resolution with the inspired words of hope and virtue.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LADY BEVERLY and Elkington drove home from the ball at Mr. de B——’s in no very amiable mood. The inquiries which Lady Beverly had so pertinaciously put to Claude respecting his family, had been the result of a settled plan to embarrass and disgrace him, and it perfectly well succeeded till his last reply, which, with the dignity of truth, turned the tables against them, carried conviction to every heart, and rather created sympathy than the distrust and derision intended. In proportion to their disappointment at their failure, their detestation increased. On reaching the hotel after the ball, instead of retiring to bed, they sat up, engaged in a conversation upon the state of their affairs, in which Claude now began to play an important *rôle*.

“If ever two young fools on earth loved each other,” said Lady Beverly, “they are mutually in love. They both conceal it as far as they can; but, in my opinion, they privately understand each other, and have already formed a plan to break off your engagement. Is it likely that they should be

together so much as they have been, with such feelings as they evidently entertain for each other, without a mutual explanation?"

"If I can drive on this affair with Carolan," said Elkington, "I shall have something to stand on till the old man dies. I can keep Shooter quiet, and arrange my other affairs till the event, which cannot be far off, comes to relieve me. At the moment of success, this detested coward steps between me and my hopes. He slights and insults me with every look. Before Ida knew him she was quite decided. She would have married me at any moment. But now she's shy—cool—timid. I find her sometimes abstracted and melancholy—sometimes in tears—and lately she has even frowned in a way which I don't like. I'll marry her, whether she will or not; that is in my power. She shall be my wife if it break her heart; and if I could but blow this scoundrel's brains out, and marry her afterward, I would hasten back to London, pay my debts, hush up those two cursed affairs, and in future conduct operations a little more cautiously. As for this Wyndham, he needn't think to escape me. I have lived two-and-twenty years in the world, and very possibly I have overlooked a favour, but, by —, I never forget an injury or an insult."

"But this man won't fight."

"Won't?" said Elkington, starting from his seat, and pacing the room with a hurried step. "He can't avoid it. I'll *make him*. No man, be his *principles* what they may, can escape it. Won't fight? I have heard of this before; but I never yet found the person whom, when I chose, I could not force to it, and whom, when once there, I could not teach the danger of crossing me with impunity. Claude Wyndham has insulted, injured, and thwarted me. I am not to be trampled on with impunity, nor am I one of those who shrink from availing themselves of means which every gentleman sanctions and adopts."

"But human life—my son," said Lady Beverly, "have you not already too much stained your hands?"

"No. It is a prejudice. What is human life more than other life? It was *made* to be extinguished by a thousand chances. Men are but insects, who are born by millions—who come and go like gnats in the breeze. They perish in the field of battle—in the wreck—by famine—by pestilence, and their own excesses. They are like the reptiles which lie across our path as we walk; we cannot help treading on them. What avails *one* more or less? Yet these cautious cowards would have us believe that earth and heaven are moved when a miserable creature like this Wyndham is turned into his grave a few years before his time."

"But your own life, my son."

"I care not for my own life. What is life to me, that I should value, or death, that I should fear it? My youth is past, and with it all my hopes of pleasure. I have quaffed the cup till sated with its cloying sweets. What, after all, has life to offer me but a few enjoyments; startling, because full of danger; or sweet, only to sicken me the sooner? I confess, on this miserable earth I find no great attraction. Every real pleasure is forbidden by law, by society, or by the narrow limits of our own natures. We can't enjoy as we would. Internal diseases follow every feast which is spread before the eyes of poor mortals; and, as if the world had been created by a *fiend*, a youth of pleasure is sure to be followed by an age of pain. Already I begin to feel the effects of plucking the fruit that hangs around me, and of drinking the stream which flows at my feet. Yet what is it there for, if not for us? No. If I don't value the lives of others, neither do I my own. I have nothing to regret—nothing to regret me. When I die, it will be but the falling off of a leaf unmourned, unmissed. If I have nothing to

regret in life, neither have I anything to fear in death. *I believe in no hereafter!*"

"Alas! who can tell?" said Lady Beverly.

"I can, madam. My common sense tells me that this is an idle dream—a folly of the nursery—a tale of priests and poets—an impossibility. What! live without life? be crushed by a piece of granite, like a trodden fly, and yet exist, and breathe, and see, and move? bah! It is ridiculous. It is a lie. When we die, we *die*. Things to us are ended. The spider that we tread on, and the man we kill—once gone, are gone. It is all black—blank—void—and who cares? What difference does it make whether he or I go a day or two sooner or later? *Who* watches over us—our fates—our actions? Who will care if I kill him, or he me? Who sees—who knows—who takes note of all the multifarious incidents of mankind, age after age? No, no—thank God!—if life has few charms for me, death has fewer terrors. It is but a bullet—a flash—a leap—and then—a sound sleep. The rest is a bugbear!"

A knock at the door interrupted him, and Scarlet entered with a letter, which, he said, had been left by a person enveloped in a cloak, so that his face could not be seen. Elkington took the letter, dismissed the servant, broke the seal, and read.

"For God sake, Edward, what is it?" said Lady Beverly, as she watched his countenance. He made no reply till he had finished perusing it; then he struck his hand violently upon the table and said,

"It only wanted this. I'll tread that man beneath my heel like an adder."

"Edward, what does this mean?"

"Read, and tell me whether this is not enough to sanction any step?"

She read aloud. It was Claude's letter to Count Carolan, enclosing that from Denham. The two had been sent by another hand in a third envelope.

"I will silence him," said Elkington.

"But how?"

"He must meet me before another day is passed."

"He will not."

"He *shall*; he must be made to. I'll insult him. I'll choose the most public scene to heap on him all the odium he merits. I'll insult every lady who walks with him. There is no provocation which one man can offer another which I will not thrust upon him. I'll ring in his ears, and in the ears of all around him, that he is a coward and a villain. I'll brand him aloud with every epithet of scorn."

"Edward! Edward!" said Lady Beverly, following him backward and forward through the room.

"And if," said he, "he refuses to fight, I'll—"

The door was suddenly thrown open, and Scarlet announced "Mr. Wyndham."

"Mr. Wyndham?" cried Lady Beverly, with astonishment. "It is certainly some mistake. Mr. Wyndham?"

"You are a fool," said Elkington. "Who is it? *what* is it?"

"It is Mr. Wyndham, my lord, with another person."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Beverly, "what can this mean?"

"Admit them!" said Elkington, sternly, and with a feeling at his heart which even he, wide as had been his experience in human sensations, had never known before.

At the word of the servant Claude entered, dragging in with an iron grasp an individual who, although he resisted, seemed scarcely to require an effort of his athletic arm. Thrust into the middle of the floor, he lifted a pale countenance, so much altered that he was with difficulty recognised as the complaisant and even amiable *Carl*. Claude advanced to the table where Lady Beverly and Elkington had been sitting. He was calm, and even cour-

teous in his demeanour, but his face, as eminently formed to express sternness as gentleness, exhibited determination which, for a minute, awed both the persons whose midnight privacy he had so unexpectedly and unceremoniously interrupted. Lady Beverly leaned for support upon the table. Elkington stood half stupified with indignation, yet, for the moment, too thunderstruck to speak, but his eyes glittered with a passion more terrible from its stillness.

"I might offer an apology to Lady Beverly," said Claude, "for this abrupt and unseasonable visit, but the occasion must be its own excuse."

"Speak on, sir," said Lady Beverly, for Elkington seemed speechless with astonishment and rage.

"Passing accidentally your door but this instant, I saw my servant approach it, muffled in a cloak—hand a letter—and hastily retreat with signs of guilty caution. I followed and seized him as he was creeping stealthily back to his home. I demanded whom he had been to see—what employment he was charged with from other persons than myself—whom else he served—what letter he had delivered—and why this air of guilty secrecy. The boy is a coward as well as a scoundrel, and, terrified at being detected, he instantly made a confession so singularly involving the honour of yourself, madam, and Lord Elkington, that, as much from respect to you as from justice to myself, I determined that you should confront him on the instant and convict him of the falsehood."

"This insult—this outrage," cried Lady Beverly.

"D—tion, sir!" said Elkington, reaching from a bookcase at his side a pair of duelling pistols, and laying them with a quaking hand and an ashy face upon the table, "if you are not a scoundrel—"

"Repeat, sir," said Claude to Carl, "what you have just confessed to me."

"I confess—" said Carl, in excellent English.

"How!" said Claude. "Do you speak English?"

"Yes, monsieur; pardon me—forgive me—do not put me in prison. I will relate all, indeed, indeed I will—"

"If you utter one word, you cowardly rascal, respecting me or my affairs, I'll send this bullet through your head," said Elkington.

"*Oh, mon Dieu!*" said Carl, whining and crying, "what shall I do, what shall I do?"

"He declares that for some time past he has been in your pay; that you have promised to take him with you to England in your employ; that he has rendered you an account of my actions—conversations—journals—and private letters and papers—"

"He is an infamous liar!" said Elkington, "and you are the same; and I will so proclaim you in public wherever I meet you."

"Your language, my lord, convinces me that, however vile may be my servant, he has employers yet more so."

"Coward! you shall give me satisfaction for this; you shall hear from me before you sleep, and in a way which, if you are not dead to every feeling of honour—"

"Of my *honour*, my lord," said Claude, "I am the guardian, and I believe *you* are not the judge."

"Then I brand the words coward and liar upon your forehead. I will thunder them in your ear—I will write them beneath your name in all companies, at all hours—I will never meet you in the streets, in the ball, in the church even, without pointing, and hissing, and proclaiming aloud, There stands a *coward!*"

"If you can point your finger," said Claude, with perfect composure, "at one action of my life which dishonours me, I shall feel annoyed by the terms you make use of. Otherwise they pass by me 'as the idle wind,' and I shall avoid you as a madman,

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or take measures to secure myself against you as a ruffian. The words of a man like you can neither awake my passion nor permanently injure my character. As for the charge I make against you, I wish I could believe it untrue."

"It is untrue, I solemnly declare," said Lady Beverly.

"And I so pronounce it, on the faith of a gentleman and a man of honour," said Elkington; "and let any one but an outcast like yourself, deny, nay, doubt it, at his peril. The good name of a nobleman and a lady are not to be destroyed by the raving of a *valet-de-chambre*, nor the malignant plots of a miserable impostor, without rank, fortune, or family; a child of guilt and chance, whose father is probably in a convict's cell—whose mother—"

Claude laid his hand on the pistol nearest him, and Elkington, with a sneer of triumph and hate, grasped his, and continued, "Whose mother, after a life of pollution, has died, amid hisses and jeers, on the *scaffold*."

It was obvious that this coarse language was the mode by which Elkington hoped to taunt and lash his foe to desperation; for he knew in his heart that he was no coward, and that he had only to give passion one moment an ascendancy over that calm reason and high principle which inspired his life, and shed a kind of divine protection around him, to push him into a duel, and quench the hate which had now taken possession of his soul to a fearful extent. It is not certain that Claude, thus goaded beyond example and almost beyond bearing, might not have consented to arrangements for an immediate meeting; but he remembered his promise given to Madame Wharton, and laid down the deadly weapon. At the same moment he perceived something which again reminded him that he was dealing with a man beneath his notice.

"You deny, then, that you have had any private communication with my servant?" asked Claude.

"Most positively," said Elkington, "and I pronounce him—"

"Spare your invectives, my lord," said Claude. "That he who could be base enough to do such a thing, would be mean enough to deny it, does not surprise me; but I *am* astonished that such a skilful practitioner as Lord Elkington should make the denial without at least first dropping from his hand the evidence of his guilt."

Elkington looked down, and beheld the letter which Claude had written to Carolan, and which, in his confusion, he had retained in his hand. It was open, and the signature, "Claude Wyndham," was conspicuously visible. The letter from Denham was also lying open on the table.

"You will excuse my resuming my own property," said Claude, reaching forward and taking the two letters.

Elkington's eyes absolutely flashed with fury as Claude moved to take the letter from his hand, and he cocked the pistol and raised it, his face whitening with his dreadful purpose. But the act of deliberately shooting an unarmed man, of sending headlong into eternity the human being who stands erect before him, in all the loveliness of life, requires a nerve which can scarcely be the gift but of madness, and which even this reckless villain had not yet become sufficiently frantic to acquire. Besides, there are consequences. The law is awakened when such a deed is openly done. There is no hushing it up; and a vision of a dungeon and a crowded court—of a felon's chain and a felon's fate—formed a restraint upon the hand of Elkington which neither generosity nor religion would have excited.

He muttered in a voice choked and husky with rage,

"Wyndham, you shall hear from me to-morrow. You shall not carry it off in this manner."

"No, my lord, your message will be useless.

You may murder me if you will, and take the consequences. My life, like that of every other man, is exposed to the attempt of an assassin. Your threats I despise—your calumnies I defy. A peaceful conscience will secure me from the one, and a pure life from the other. For my courage, my lord, you may think and speak of it as you please; but I shall expose your baseness without hesitation or fear, and perhaps call upon the law of our common country to protect me against the falsehood of so unprincipled a slanderer. Should you dare to direct against an unarmed man the blind fury of an assassin, I leave those laws to punish you as a murderer merits.”

“Cautious coward!” said Elkington, and again raised his arm. The demon in his soul whispered him to fire, and thus plunge with so mortal an enemy down the chasm of death. It is possible that, had his foe shown any symptom of fear or retreat, he might so far have lost his reason as to have accomplished his dark intention; but Claude was a man of strong nerve as well as of perfect courage, and he really feared death as little and much less than his rival. To him life was now bereft of its charm, and perhaps secretly he was scarce displeased at the thought of a sudden blow, which would terminate an existence doomed to such sad despair. This real indifference to death shed around him a calm grandeur. He stood firm and cool—the very smile on his lips unchanged—and the sternness of his brow softening into something of derision and contempt, while his clear, searching eye bent on his antagonist a gaze that pierced and cowed his soul; and his unprotected breast lay so unshrinkingly open to the blow, that, in addition to the idea of a gibbet, a sentiment of shame touched the villain’s heart and caused him to lower his weapon.

Lady Beverly, after an ineffectual attempt to arrest his arm, fell back fainting on the sofa.

"We shall meet again," said Elkington. "There will be a time!"

Claude withdrew without haste. Again he found himself alone in the cool, silent night. His eye was cast again over the tranquil streets and up to the starry sky. One motion of Elkington's finger, and he would have never gazed on these fair objects more.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It is often observed that events of peculiar interest come crowding upon us together. The man who has inherited a rich legacy is not unlikely to draw a prize in the lottery, or he who has just lost a ship at sea, to have his house burned down at about the same period. One might almost be tempted to think that superior beings wove, in a kind of sport, the destinies of mortals; conscious, perhaps, that hereafter the objects of their amusement will be raised so far above their present condition as to join in the merriment which all that belongs merely to earth is alone worthy to excite.

Elkington, after pacing his room all night in a state which precluded the possibility of sleep, sent early the next morning for a gentleman whom he knew he might trust with the commission he intended to ask of him. This was a retired French officer, who, like himself, was a duellist in principle and by profession, having in his time sent to a bloody grave several persons who had inadvertently trodden on his toe, occupied his seat at the opera, looked at his female companions, or committed some other heinous offences, without offering in reparation exactly the kind of apology which he thought

becoming. He was a fierce-looking little man, with an ugly face and a still more disagreeable person. He had no qualities which rendered him pleasing. He did not pay his debts, nor serve his friends with fidelity, unless when he thought his interest required him to do so. Nobody really liked him. But he was invited everywhere. He was a brave man, and had performed some gallant feats in action; but, having been shot through the body in one duel with a brother officer, because he would not disown an expression which he afterward confessed he had never used, and having received a cut across the cheek in another, from a person who said he was an ass, and who, upon being called upon to retract, declared himself ready to abide by what he had said, and accordingly left on his physiognomy this visible record of his opinion—having received these disqualifications for the service, he had retired on a small fortune, and had become a kind of authority in affairs of honour. The name of this gentleman was General Le Beau, although one can scarcely imagine a name less expressive of the appearance of the individual who bore it.

On receiving the commands of Elkington, he twirled his long red mustache between his thumb and finger, gave a significant smile, took the note, and proceeded to fulfil his task.

Scarcely had he gone when Scarlet entered with three letters. The first was in a hand with which he was not acquainted. It ran thus :

“Although Lord Elkington is ignorant of the name and existence of the writer of this note, the latter has the most accurate knowledge of your lordship and his affairs. It is not impossible that your lordship may be at first incredulous on reading it, but a few moments’ conversation with your lordship’s mother will entirely convince you of its truth. I ain’t a rich or a great man like your lordship, but

fortune has made me the possessor of a secret which has been for some time a source of profit, and which, I freely tell your lordship, I shall use to my own advantage. Your lordship is aware that your noble father, the Earl of Beverly, was married before he united himself to your mother, the present Lady Beverly. That match was unfortunate, as the world well knows; *but*—I beg to call your lordship's attention to this fact—there is a circumstance connected with it which neither your lordship nor the world knows, *viz.*, that the issue of that marriage *yet survives*, in the person of a *son*, who is, in reality, the heir of your father's estate. This secret exists solely and exclusively *in my bosom*. The son of the Earl of Beverly, for causes which doubtless can be explained, should it be necessary to investigate the matter in a court of justice, went with his mother to the West Indies. The vessel in which they sailed was wrecked, and all on board perished but two persons. One was the child, who was picked up senseless from a spar (to which the mother had attached him, being herself washed overboard and drowned before she could make herself fast); the other individual saved was myself. We were picked up by the same ship, and I was carried, with the child, into Boston. It had happened that I knew the Earl of Beverly having had a boyish passion for a young female in his household, who, before I left England, had revealed to me certain family secrets of a highly important nature, and, among others, that the mother of this child had fled from her husband in consequence of charges against her honour of the vilest kind. I had seen her in the earl's family (then Mr. Lawson), and I recognised her on board the ship which bore us to the New World, although she was there under an assumed name, and was totally unknown to all but myself. Here, then, I found myself with this boy, whom no one in America knew anything of. Being aware that his father had dis-

owned him, I thought that I might serve both the boy and myself by keeping, for a time, the secret of his birth. For years I kept my eye on him, for a finer fellow never walked. His beauty and character at length attracted the attention of a lady, who, hearing of his desolate situation, took him with her to England, at the age of eight years. Dying, she bequeathed him as a legacy to a lady, who educated him till he left the University. It was then that I informed the Earl of Beverly of his existence. That nobleman arranged with me never to reveal the secret, and has paid me for my silence.

“Your lordship will probably learn, on the same day which brings you this, that your noble father has been seized with another fit, which will probably end his existence long before the arrival of my letter. Your lordship, on beholding such an inheritance within your grasp, would not like to be dispossessed by a stranger—a misfortune which would not only leave your lordship penniless, but, I believe, deeply in debt. I have not intrusted this letter to the hands of a third person, upon a question so extremely embarrassing and important, but have come to Berlin in person, and am waiting your lordship’s leisure. As this is purely a matter of business, we had better discard all ceremony, and come directly to the point. I received an annuity of £100 from the earl, on condition of keeping this secret, and he assured me that a provision to that effect would be found in his will. A life of idleness, however, has caused me to contract expensive habits, and I no longer find this allowance sufficient. Just at this time, too, I am unfortunately in debt to a considerable amount. I expect from your lordship the immediate means of relief. A note left at the post-office, to the address of Mr. *Oliver Richards*, will procure you an interview with me, at the hour and place most convenient to your lordship. I need not hint that, should your lordship be reluctant to nego-

tiate with me, I shall be able, probably, to procure better terms from the other party.

“Your lordship’s obedient servant,

“OLIVER RICHARDS.”

Elkington’s first impulse on reading this strange epistle was to laugh at it as a *hoax*, and he dropped it on the table as a thing requiring no more attention, while he opened the second letter. It came from the Marquis of Manby. Its contents were as follows :

“MY DEAR ELKINGTON :

“The melancholy duty has devolved upon me of informing you of the sudden, and, I fear, fatal malady which has attacked your father. He was reading this morning in his library ; a violent ringing of the bell called the servants to his side, when he was found struggling in his *fauteuil* in a fit of the most alarming description. Doctor B—— and Sir Richard L—— have pronounced his case incurable. It is not impossible, they say, that he may recover so far as to retain life for months, and perhaps a year ; but that he can never again leave his bed, or recover his senses except as a prelude to immediate dissolution, is quite certain. I need not say that we deeply sympathize with the distress which this event will occasion your amiable mother, and the pain it will inflict upon you particularly, as I have been told some coolness had unhappily arisen between your esteemed parent and yourself. I need only say, my dear Elkington, that, while I sympathize profoundly with your grief, I am the most sincere, as I am the first of your friends to congratulate you upon the magnificent inheritance which is about to descend to you, and which, I am quite certain, could not have fallen into more worthy hands. Command me in any way, should necessity detain you some days longer on the Continent.

“Ever faithfully yours,

“MANBY.

“P.S.—Sir Richard L—— has just told me that his patient is beyond the danger of any immediate change; he is quite senseless, and will probably thus remain for an indefinite period.”

The perusal of this letter threw a more serious character over the first. He took it up, and read it again with greater attention. It was written in a rude, unpractised hand, as by one not used to a pen; and there was about it a sort of bold familiarity, and an insolence, checked at times by an assumed air of respect, which seemed natural enough under such circumstances. The writer, at least, was aware of the incident related by the Marquis of Manby. He had, it seems, started, the instant the earl's dangerous illness was known, from London to Berlin; and, if it were a *hoax*, by the offer of an interview he had placed in his reach the means of ascertaining at once whether such a person was in existence. But, should some one present himself in the character of Mr. Oliver Richards, and with such a demand for money, was not the story he had told evidently a bungling and absurd tissue of improbabilities, if not of impossibilities, trumped up by some of those hackneyed London swindlers who, from the recesses of that vast Babel, ever watch, in the goings on of the world around them, an opportunity of making some one their prey? Possibly few heirs have acceded to such brilliant possessions as that magnificent, long-sighed-for inheritance now about to become his own, without being made the object of some audacious fraud of this kind.

“It is a contemptible scheme to extort money,” said he, although pale with the ideas which it had conjured up. “It is a stupid, infamous fabrication, and, if the scoundrel presents himself, I'll—”

With a shaking hand—for debauchery and unbridled passion had long ago destroyed his nerves, and deprived him of the power of self-command on

the most trivial agitation—he broke the seal of the third letter. It was from Mr. Pennington, his father's solicitor; and as he read, the last drop of blood ebbed from his face, and the last spark of courage from his heart. Poverty—sudden disgrace—debt—destitution—the enmity of Shooter, to whom he owed so much, and who was desperate enough to revenge himself in any way—the dreaded Abraham, with his enormous claims—a jail, with all its dismal misery, rushed upon his mind, and with them a thousand other horrors, vague, startling, and insupportable.

The letter of the solicitor was in the following words :

“MY LORD,

“ You are probably aware of the event which has reduced your distinguished father to a bed of death, from which I am advised by his medical attendant he can never rise, and which precludes all idea of his again assuming the care of his affairs. I beg leave, therefore, my lord, to address myself to you, and shall await your orders.

“ The point upon which I first request your directions relates to the annuity which, your lordship is probably aware, has been for several years paid by the earl to a certain person by the name of Claude Wyndham. The affair has been conducted with secrecy from reasons never communicated to me, but which, I presume, your lordship is aware of. I have been instructed to deposite yearly, in the hands of Messrs. N. B. & Co., the sum of £500 in advance, without letting these gentlemen or any other person know from whose hand it comes. As the usual period of the deposite is now arrived, I delay making it only till I hear from your lordship; and I beg your lordship to furnish me, at your earliest convenience, with instructions as to future proceedings.

“ I have the honour to be, etc, etc,

“ JOHN PENNINGTON.”

The whole truth was now before him. It broke upon him with a force which made his head reel. So sudden, so unexpected and blasting was the stroke, that it completely appalled his heart. It seemed like a judgment hurled upon him from Heaven to arrest his guilty and bloody course. Thoughts that made him start now rose upon his mind. The resemblance which he had often perceived in Wyndham to some one he had seen before, particularly when sternness came over his countenance and indignation flashed to his eyes—this singular resemblance, curious as it may appear, he now for the first time perceived, was to *his father*; but in the smooth face of youth and health, the expression had not been traced to that of the earl, now worn with grief, thought, and age, and his head covered with white hairs. It was, undoubtedly, more a resemblance to the earl as he had been in his youth than as he was now. Lady Beverly's unaccountable anxiety respecting him, too—her pale watchfulness—her morbid curiosity to ascertain who he was—her hatred of him—her unceasing endeavours to ruin him—her unaccountable eagerness to conclude the union with Ida—her half-hinted fears as to the possibility of his losing his father's estates, which had often struck him, and which had always been inexplicable—the letters and journals he had been enabled to read by the aid of Carl—a thousand circumstances rose to his memory, all never particularly reviewed before, all pointing to one astounding truth, that the man he most hated and pursued was *his brother*—was the destined master of Ida's hand—was the true heir of his father's estates and title—was in every way his successful rival—his superior—his evil demon. His inflated heart, so proud, so vain, so brave in a moment of personal danger, so ready to tax others with cowardice, so ready to inflict every kind of pain on those around him—this bad heart—without religion, principle, or virtue, and

therefore without the *real* courage which springs from Heaven and which leads to it—quailed and sunk into a state of entire helplessness and agony. The thought of misfortune to himself cowed him, and in that moment the fashionable and gallant Elkington shook like the meanest coward.

He was aroused by the voice of Lady Beverly, who entered suddenly. She was in a rich morning dress, going to call on the Carolans and drive in the Park. Scarlet announced the carriage, and she came in to give him the usual morning salutations in high spirits.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE first thing which met the eyes of Lady Beverly as she entered the room was Elkington; his face pallid, his whole manner marked by extraordinary agitation, and three open letters upon the table.

“Good Heaven! Edward,” cried she, “what is the matter?” And the sight of his distress banished the smile from her lips.

“Shut the door!” said he, in a husky voice.

She obeyed.

“Where’s Scarlet?”

“He waits with the carriage.”

“Dismiss the carriage.”

“Great Heaven! what does this mean? From whom are these letters? What is the matter?”

“Do as I bid you!” said he, sternly.

Startled to be addressed in so rude a manner, the affrighted woman obeyed without speaking.

“Look to the two outer room doors,” said he; “we must be alone, and no eyes must peer at us through cracks and keyholes, as your trusty Carl makes his observations of Mr. *Claude Wyndham*! Now, madam, I have news for you.”

“For the love of Heaven—!”

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"You have taken, as you thought, very efficient measures to ascertain *who* is your friend Mr. Claude Wyndham?"

"Yes," said Lady Beverly, turning deadly pale; "what do you know of him?"

"That he is the son of my father," said Elkington—"that he is *my brother*—that he is the heir of the Beverly estates and titles! The clothes we wear, the carriage we drive, our luxuries, our fortunes, our expectations, are his, and we are beggars!"

Lady Beverly stared wildly at her son as he made this abrupt communication with the air of a ruffian, for vice, debauchery, and passion had entirely brutalized his nature. She made an attempt to laugh, but, with an hysterical gasp, she staggered back, and his arm only saved her from falling upon the floor. He bore her to the sofa, and threw her upon it.

"D—tion!" said he; "she has been up to this before. I *knew* she had something in her mind. I wish to God she might lie there till—"

He finished in an under tone his dire imprecation, and, taking a glass of water, dashed it in her face. In a few moments she recovered.

"Oh, God!" cried she, "what is all this? Is it a dream? Edward, my son—my beloved Edward—you are pale—you tremble—your eyes glitter with unnatural light—say I am raving—say it is a dream—what—when—"

"It is *no* dream, madam," and he pointed to the letters. "I tell you we are beggars, unless—"

Lady Beverly seized the letters, and read them with shaking hands and choking breath. When she had finished she pressed her hands against her forehead with a gesture of deep despair.

"Is it true?" demanded Elkington, fiercely.

"It is. It is the judgment of Heaven. God's own hand is in it. The bolt which has been so long hovering over my head has fallen at last. We are—we are beggars. Claude Wyndham is—"

"Silence, madam," said Elkington, in a voice of

thunder. "Breathe not a word, if you do not wish me to inflict upon you instant *death*, and to finish the morning by blowing my own brains out."

He opened a case and took down a pair of pistols. Lady Beverly, by the greatness of the danger, and with the effort of a mind, although darkly stained with guilt, yet greatly superior in strength to that of her son, caught his arm.

"Let me go, madam. By ——, I will never live to be taunted with dishonour—to be the victim of poverty—of debt—of derision—of pity. One single blow, and I shall rest in peace."

"When other means fail," said Lady Beverly, in a low voice, but one full of calmness, and which arrested and awed him for a moment—"when the world knows what we know—when Claude Wyndham himself knows it—when he *has* his *estates*—when no other means are left to save us from poverty, I will, with you, by a single act, end all my shame and misery; but you are giving up the battle before it is fought. Claude Wyndham may be kept ignorant—this Richards may be kept silent. What cause is there for despair *yet*, even should this secret transpire? Before that event can take place, you may become the husband of Ida, or Claude Wyndham may die! You are then the rightful holder of a fortune of your own."

"But this Richards!" said Elkington, a glance of hope shooting across his gloomy countenance; "with such an insolent cutthroat at my side, how can I secure myself against his demands? Will two—three—five—ten thousand pounds satisfy him? What limits are there to his voracity? The more I give, the more he will require. I shall live a slave with this cursed thing hanging over me. I shall tremble at every whisper!"

"There is one thing which you can do to secure an independence, and rescue you from Richards and all other fears; but, before you can comprehend the subject in all its bearings, I must tell you, at length,

the fearful and black secret which has preyed upon my mind for so many years, and which, but for *you* and your interest, I should long ago have revealed, for I am not totally lost to principle."

"To what, madam?"

"Do not sneer, my son!"

"When you begin to *cant*, I cannot help it. Tell your story plainly; I really want to hear it, since I am, it appears, so much interested."

"Are the doors perfectly safe?" said Lady Beverly.

Elkington rose and opened the door of the drawing-room where they sat. It was a corner chamber, looking on two sides upon the street, and on the other two sides opening into two other rooms, both appropriated by themselves. These outer doors were firmly locked.

"You may speak," said he; "no one can overhear us."

Lady Beverly threw off her shawl and opened her dress, as if with a sense of heat and suffocation; a paleness overspread her countenance like that of death, and she made one or two ineffectual attempts to speak before her voice would perform its office.;

CHAPTER XXX.

"WE are in a desperate extremity," said she, "and I am going to confess to you the story of a life which has been wrecked with passion and blackened with guilt. Two motives sustain me in thus laying naked to the eyes of any human being, and especially of a son, the abasement to which I have been sunk. One of these motives is a hope that such a task will be received as a kind of penance, and the other, that the full knowledge of this subject may influence you to acquiesce in what I

shall propose, and thus disburden my heart of a portion of its load of guilt."

"Oh bah! madam," said Elkington, with a brutal sneer; "pray spare your episodes, and set to the point at once."

"When your father was Mr. Lawton," commenced Lady Beverly, "I met him by chance at a ball at Lady C——'s. He was the most brilliant and dangerous man of the day. His personal attraction, manners, and character were so peculiar, that few female hearts could withstand his fascinations. He was on friendly terms with my father, General Carlton, and came often to our home; we were not rich, but we were not poor; we lived happily, and even elegantly; and I flattered myself that, if the qualities of the father had first attracted so distinguished a visiter, he was retained, ere long, by those of the daughter. I was sixteen, and very beautiful. Do not think me vain; for my beauty now has passed away; and it was that beauty which depraved my character and darkened my destiny. A fatal gift it often is to woman. I conceived for your father a passion so devoted, that it partook of the fervour of adoration. No Persian ever worshipped the sun with more fidelity, admiration, and faith, than I hung on the changes of his noble face, drank the tones of his voice, and felt the beams of his eyes penetrating into all the virgin depths of my soul. This passion was not alone the affection which a guileless woman bears to the object of her attachment. It was mingled with a deep-seated ambition—a love of admiration—a vanity—a mania, which all combined to render him the sole object of my wishes. He was my life. He was my god. The attention which my beauty excited had already ruined my disposition. I thought alone of my charms—of how I should appear—of my renown as the loveliest girl of the day—of the power which this gave me over all around—of the envy of the women, and the sighs of

the men. I thought alone of these. My character was never weeded—my moral nature never developed—my heart disciplined—my mind guided—my passions governed. I was given up to the accidental effects of universal admiration upon a heart not easily touched by feeling, and never instructed in the way of duty. The passion which Mr. Lawton inspired me with became known to him. I do not think he at first loved me; but the idea that a lovely girl had given him her heart—that he had won it without knowing it—softened his feelings towards me into something very like love, and gave me hopes which kept alive, in all its intensity, the love I bore him.

“At this period his affairs called him to the Continent, where he made a tour of several years. I heard of him from time to time; at first he wrote often to my father. Then his letters grew less frequent. At length I learned that *he was married*. The effect was to throw me into a fever, from which I did not recover in many months.

“In a year he returned with his wife. I sought information respecting her—this blaster of my hopes. She was lovely beyond my worst fears; lovelier, by far, than I. Without brilliancy, she had softness; and, with few superficial accomplishments, she possessed a mind trained to the loftiest virtue, and stored with solid information. She was far less likely to dazzle in a gay circle than I; but, once known, she was more sure to charm. The peculiar enchantment of her character was a modest and yet perfect intelligence, and an innocence guileless and pure. Both of these qualities shone in her countenance, inspired her words and actions, and shed around her whole manner an enchantment which entirely mastered the high and susceptible heart of Mr. Lawton. Besides this, she was an orphan, left entirely destitute, under circumstances the most likely to touch the ever-generous feelings of your

father, which started always at the thought of another's wo. She had always lived in the family of a rich Italian nobleman, whose carriage fell from one of the precipices which beetle over the Mediterranean between Nice and Genoa. Her patron and his lady were dashed to pieces. By a curious chance, she had become alarmed a few moments previous to the accident, and requested permission to walk up the mountain. She was thus saved; but she found herself alone, without friends, without resources. Beautiful beyond description, and trembling at a position so full of danger, your father, who had known the family in Venice, upon whom the merits of this remarkable young girl had before made an impression, and who, through the enthusiastic representations of her unfortunate patron, had conceived a high idea of her character and mind, met her again by accident, and heard with horror of the event which had left her so isolated, and of her entire destitution. He visited her. The modest reserve of her manners did not permit her to see him often; but, in banishing him from her presence, she only heightened its effect and increased his ardour. A profligate English nobleman at the same time persecuted her with attentions the most unprincipled, and offers the most gross. He was a villain, such as affluence and debauchery often produce upon a bad heart and a shallow understanding. Terrified and in despair, she was about to throw herself into a convent, when your father, gifted with an exquisite impression of beauty and moral worth, and ever above interested considerations, offered her his hand, which she accepted, for he had long made upon her the impression which he could always make when he pleased.

“But the very perfection of his happiness rendered it fleeting. The honeymoon had scarcely passed, when plans were set on foot by the young nobleman in question, Lord M——, to poison his envied

bliss ; to ruin the peace and reputation of his wife, and at once to revenge, and perhaps gratify, the unrequited passion which she had inspired. Whispers of the darkest import were put in circulation. The character of her late patron was indirectly attacked ; Lord M—— openly boasted of the progress of his suit before the sudden arrival of Lawton had caused her to change her plans, and to play for an honourable marriage with a man whose expectations were so brilliant. Of these expectations, however, the poor child knew nothing. She married your father because she loved him, and saw that he loved her ; and she would have been far happier to pass her life with him in some peaceful middle rank, than to accompany him to the dazzling yet dangerous heights of London fashionable society.

On their arrival in London, Lord M—— followed them. He was a profligate in want of excitement. His soul was aroused by a game worthy of him, and he resolved not to abandon the object of his pursuit, but to complete his revenge by alienating from her the affections of a husband whom he feared and envied. I heard these whispers with trembling rapture. They were the first relief my soul had known since the moment I learned that your father had forgotten me in the arms of another, whose simple sweetness so far eclipsed my renowned beauty. By every means in my power I watched and aided this gradual estrangement. I scarcely knew at first whether or not it was true. A burning hope had risen within me, that even yet Lawton and I might be united. I will not—I dare not—go into the dark details. It is sufficient to say the end was accomplished. My father had recently died and left me my own mistress, with an old aunt who was superannuated, but yet sufficed as my matron, and who soon afterward died. I had become acquainted with this young *roué*, Lord M——, and, by half convincing him of the truth of his charges, he made me the

sharer of them. I managed once to secrete him in my house while Mrs. Lawton was there, and to produce the sudden interruption of her husband. By other means most artfully managed, this was made to wear a conclusive aspect, and Mr. Lawton was convinced, and rushed from his wife with a look of horror and despair. If you will believe me, this was the first intimation the innocent and artless creature had of what was going on. On returning home—alone—terrified—bewildered by some wild and anguish-stricken expressions from the lips of her husband, she received a brief note, ordering her to repair immediately to my house. She did so. There she received another letter, commanding her to leave England immediately, and never to call herself by his name. An annuity was offered her—anything she might choose—but on condition of her quitting London, and never making inquiries after him again. She was advised to remain till her departure at my house (if I would receive her), and thence to make her arrangements for an immediate embarkation for the Continent. I remember the letter ended with, ‘Go, guilty, lost being; you are free—you are no longer my wife. I raised you from poverty—from despair. Serpent! you have stung me; come no more across my path, or I shall, with the honest indignation of virtue, put my foot upon you, and trample you into the ground.’

“I handed her this letter. Never shall I forget the look of dignity, the heavenly radiance which shone around her as she dropped the paper upon the floor, and stood a moment in mute horror and agony. Then the tears gushed from her eyes and streamed through her fingers as she endeavoured to stop their flow. She sank upon her knees, hid her face for several moments in silent prayer, and then rose calmly. Her face was pale all day, as yours and mine, alas! are now. Her eyes were filled with tears half shed; but there was a native dignity—

a heavenly pride, which prevented all other outward show of grief or agitation. What most astonished me was, there was no indignation—no noise—no demands to see her lord—no violent protestations of innocence; she took the blow mutely and unresistingly, as an affliction from Heaven. The extreme loveliness of her appearance only made me hate her more, with all the fury of a jealous soul, inspired with the hope of supplanting her in her husband's love. This, and more other dark deeds I was ready to do, goaded as I was by my rapturous hopes and unbridled passions.

“One act more I must confess, if the thunder of Heaven will permit me to proceed. There was a vile woman, known as such by all the town, whom Lord M—— brought into the plot without giving her any knowledge of the persons. To her house, the constant resort of wild young men, we sent this unsuspecting girl, to remain till she could embark for Calais. By this house Lord M—— managed to have Lawton conducted, as if accidentally, so that he saw his once adored wife talking with a person, with whom to speak was to acknowledge all. In this house she was delivered of a son. Lawton was made acquainted with the fact. He was one of those men whose high sense of honour admit of no compromise, and who, in their abhorrence of vice, go to the last extreme. This hapless girl had so utterly possessed his confidence—had so completely mastered his soul—that nothing short of what he had seen could have determined him to believe her unworthy. He had, however, seen. He had heard of the heir to his house, brought into the world in shame and dishonour; and kneeling down, he swore solemnly to his Maker to banish them both from his heart—to hear nothing from them—to ask nothing of them—to tear them off—and let them ‘down the wind, a prey to fortune.’

“It was scarcely possible to believe that a crea-

ture so soft and inexperienced possessed a character so firm and high. These qualities were indeed as conspicuous in her as they were in her husband. Neither, when once insulted and injured, as they each believed themselves to be, was capable of the slightest attempt at compromise or explanation. He, although it crushed his heart, never pronounced her name again—never asked after her—never wavered in his resolution to turn his face and his soul from her loveliness and her guilt for ever. Whatever might have been her fate, whether she broke her heart, or starved to death in the street, it was the same to him; and I believe—so deeply had the blow wounded him—that if he had seen her, in all the power of her charms, upon a scaffold, and known that a word from his lips would have rescued her, that word would not have been spoken. He had sworn to make her a stranger; and he is one, as you know, who, when fully roused to a resolution, never breaks it. There are wavering natures, who may be melted by the sight of extreme wretchedness to pardon any injury. Injuries of an ordinary kind no one would have been more ready to forget than he; but she had not only destroyed his happiness and his confidence in human nature, but she had abased his name—blasted his honour—broken his heart. He had cast her off to plague, famine, and suicide—to guilt and wo, here and hereafter.

“Like him, she was also firm. I am convinced that innocence more pure never appeared upon the earth; but in her tender and trusting soul she possessed till then, as undreamed of by herself as by others, a nature as inflexible, as unbending and haughty, as that of her husband. The parting letter of him whom she so tenderly loved came upon her like the trumpet of death. All the other evils of the world, bursting together upon her head, could not equal this sudden blow. She *had* been raised by him from poverty. She had loved him with a

trustingness which such women often put into their love. She had committed her happiness and honour to his care. She had supposed that, all mankind uniting against her, and believing evil of her, *he* would never be shaken by any proof; and yet, upon some hearsay—for she little knew the extent of the intrigue against her—without notice—without a hearing—without one word of explanation, he had cast her off—had published her ruin—had cruelly turned her adrift, friendless and bewildered, upon the world from whose dangers he had rescued her. If *his* confidence in human nature was shaken, so was hers; but her resolution was instantly conceived and put in practice. The annuity he offered she did not apply for. Though left penniless in her painful situation—about to become a mother—and not knowing where to go, she would have died with her infant rather than accept relief from the hand that had thus spurned her. The plausible lady to whose house I had recommended her, offered her, as she thought, from simple benevolence, an asylum till her illness should be over. This she accepted with tearful gratitude, as aid from Heaven. The letter of her husband she returned in an envelope to the hand that sent it, with no other comment than the stains of tears which had half effaced its fierce and burning words. When her health and that of her child permitted, she wrote me her desire to set off instantly for the Continent. As eager as herself to hasten her departure, I furnished her the means. She sailed, without seeing me again, for Havre, and there, I understood, she met a family by chance who had formerly known her. Whether she related to them her whole story, or what means she took to excite their sympathy, I do not know; but they kept her, I understand, as a governess for two or three years, when, from what cause I never learned, she embarked for the West Indies. As a sad end to so sad a life, the ship was

wrecked, and most of the crew and passengers perished. She particularly was mentioned among the rest as having been washed overboard and drowned in the early part of the storm. This news found Mr. Lawton an altered man. Having striven long and unsuccessfully against the impression the affair had left on his mind, it was more a relief than a pang; and he learned, without allowing himself even the weakness of a sigh, that these two unfortunate beings, who had so painfully clouded his bright youth and stamped his name with dishonour, were swallowed in the sea, which, if it could not wash out their stains, buried them for ever beneath its waves. I thought, then, that he had succeeded, or would succeed, in forgetting her; but I now know his attempts were vain, and that his apparent indifference was a mere effort of mind, concealing, not destroying, the feeling of his heart. He *did*, however, try to efface her image; and, as a means, he resolved to marry again. It needed no great art in me to become the object of his choice. *Love* again, I believe, he never could. But he hoped, by creating himself a new home and new duties, to succeed in turning from the past. A short time after the flight of his wife he succeeded to the title and estates of his father, and was subsequently created Earl of Beverly by his late majesty. Immediately after this event we were married, and I thus attained the summit of my wishes. But, alas! what I had done so much to obtain gave me no happiness. Instead of the tender husband I had pictured, I have found in your father a cold and gloomy companion. He seemed shocked at marrying as soon as the indissoluble knot was tied; and in less than a year, immediately on your birth, conceived an aversion both for you and myself, which has but strengthened with every succeeding hour. A thousand times I have wished the past undone; for my doom, in being obliged to live with the man I loved only as

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an object of dislike, has been a penalty for all my crimes. I have only to relate that, before our marriage, he called out Lord M——, who shot him through the thigh, which has rendered him lame ever since, and from which wound, on taking the slightest cold, he suffers, as you have seen, the most dreadful pain. These circumstances combined, ruined his temper and character. He at length resorted to the pleasures of the table and cards to divert his attention from himself. From one of the most intellectual and firm-minded men, he has become a voluptuary and a slave of violent passions. His heart wants all the softening and purifying influences of the affections. He *loves* nothing, and probably the greatest objects of his dislike are his wife and son.

“More than twenty years have thus passed away. The news of the death of his wife and child were confirmed, and the subject was only remembered by me as one of shame, guilt, repentance, and self-reproach. Many a sleepless night it has cost me. Many a wretched hour, passed even in the midst of gayety and fashion. Often and often I have wished for an opportunity of repairing the evil I have done—of revealing to your father the whole truth—and of surrendering the ill-gotten wealth, which, even while I enjoy it, cries out against me. I have lived long enough to know that nothing can compensate for the loss of self-approbation. It is the secret fountain of cheerfulness and contentment. But what opportunity had I to accomplish this end? Your father, if he knew the truth, would only be more wretched; I feared also his dreadful temper; and they who, alive, could profit by my confession, were dead. By revealing it, also, I should disinherit you, to throw those vast estates upon a stranger. It is one of the curses of vice, that when at length we discover that its path is beset with horrors, retreat itself sometimes becomes wicked as

well as dangerous, and we cannot recover the straight road, where alone our happiness lies, without sacrificing others besides ourselves. You may imagine my sensations on beholding, one evening, here in Berlin, this Claude Wyndham rise like an apparition on my path. The moment I saw him, I saw your father as he was in his youth. The same dignified and noble carriage—the same beauty and intellect of countenance—the same calm, clear eye—now gentle as a woman's, and now full of a sternness which quails before nothing, but gazes steadily, like the eagle, into the very sun. In his character I perceive, too, the same magnificent scorn of everything paltry and mean—the same invincible energy of resolution, which places itself against all mankind and against its own happiness, rather than sacrifice one of his proud prejudices—rather than lower a hair's-breadth his lofty head. I saw all this in Wyndham. On informing myself, I ascertained to a certainty that he was your father's son; and when I saw him obviously touched with the beauty and character of Ida—who is not unlike her who had his father's first vows—I trembled for her and for you. It seemed a double judgment upon me, that the phantom of the very man whom I had so loved in youth should rise before me now as my greatest enemy; and that a sweetness and beauty, like that which had once withered beneath my look, should now appear to baffle all our hopes, and take from us the last certainty of independence. Now you comprehend the reason of the agitation which you have so often remarked in me since our arrival in Berlin. I have, indeed, lived in a kind of hell, which, if they who sin could see it, would for ever after keep stainless every human being. I did hope that this *denouement* might be avoided. I bribed his servant Carl to learn how far he was himself acquainted with his history. I saw he was totally ignorant of it, but that his father knew of his

existence, and has furnished him the means of support, although in a way which marks the stern fidelity of his abhorrence, and proves that he would never be willing to receive him but on being acquainted with the innocence of his unhappy mother. I will confess farther, Edward. Notwithstanding my remorse, I cannot overcome the strange passions which are now habitual to me. On the appearance of the true heir of your father's estates, instead of seizing the often desired occasion to undo a part of what I have done, I felt the baleful passions of my youth resume their sway over my heart. I wished him *dead*, and I wished your hand might remove from our path such a dangerous enemy in an honourable meeting. Surely there would have been no guilt in this, at least on your part; for gentlemen fight and kill each other every day. I strove to make you hate him as much as myself; for I did hate as much as I feared him. I endeavoured to produce a duel; and I hoped that *he* would render our task more easy by challenging you. He has, however, wrapped himself up in an idea that this species of combat is wrong; and I feel now that nothing will make him forego this opinion, or act contrary to it. It is the very nature of his father.

“In the midst of my plans come these dreadful letters, and ruin stares us in the face. I am now about to make a proposition to you, which at first you will doubtless reject, but which, upon reflection, you will find the safest course. You must remember I have given this subject years of meditation, and have prepared myself for every event.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

ELKINGTON, with his elbows on the table, and his chin leaning on his two clinched fists, had listened to this long and astounding recital with an attention which scarcely allowed him leisure to breathe. His eyes were fixed on his mother, and his bloodless face betrayed his despair. On the conclusion he drew a long breath, and changed his attitude for the first time since its commencement. His motions were slow and thoughtful, and his agitation seemed to have subsided into gloomy reflection.

“What is your proposition?” said he, in a husky voice.

“Let us first see how the case stands!” said his mother, placing the end of her fore finger on her thumb by way of calculation. “This secret is already known to—”

“Tell me your proposition at once,” said he, “and in the fewest words possible.”

There was a fierceness in his manner, now deeply agitated as he was, which partook of the savageness of a wild beast.

“This is it, then,” said she, tremblingly. “Ask an interview with Claude Wyndham. Bind him previously by oath, whatever may be the result, not to betray the subject discussed. Offer to put him in possession of the history of his family—to present to him a father who will receive him with love, and a fortune beyond his wildest imagination—this, on condition of his binding himself to allow you one half of the estate received. It will be his interest to do so; and if he says he will make the allowance, he *will*. I hate, I loathe him, but I know that if he gives his simple word, it is stronger than other men’s

bonds. This is an offer which he cannot refuse. From a nameless traveller he will become a nobleman of rank. From almost a beggar he will suddenly become immensely rich. The dearest wish of his life will be gratified. He can then marry Ida, whom *you* only value for her fortune. You will then be above want, my bosom will be disburdened of the load which oppresses it. Your father, if he lives, will be happy. You and I will retire to Florence or Naples, where we can lead the remainder of our lives in pleasure uninterrupted by the fears which have destroyed me ever since I wandered from the innocence of youth. Think of this, my son, I conjure you. It is the only, the last request your guilty mother makes you. Say you consent, and let Claude Wyndham assume his station in society. I shall die then in peace, feeling that Heaven has forgiven me all my guilt."

"You are a fool!" said Elkington.

"Edward, how strange, how fierce you are! Have you no consideration for the mother who—"

"No, none. It is to your accursed passions, then, that I am what I am. Your vices cursed me before I came into the world. I *might* have been as free, as noble, as pure from evil as this man, who now stands scornfully between me and every hope, ready to tear from me my rank and fortune, and—for God knows whether the mother too is not saved—to brand me—*me*, madam—with the name which I have so often hurled at *him*. And now, because *you* are tired of the wages of sin—now that you are old, and hackneyed, and near your death, perhaps—I must descend from my rank—I must fling away my wealth—and, just as I am entering into one of the most brilliant positions possible, I must turn back—sneak away—become an exile from my country—the mark of scorn and the victim of dishonour—in order that *you* may have pleasant dreams—that your heart may enjoy the luxury of peace—that your dying

bed may be solaced by canting priests and idle visions of hereafter. No, madam. The mercy you have shown to others you must expect. I disclaim you as a mother if you proceed in your design. I command you to suffer *me* to be the master of my own affairs. I will *not* enter into any compromise with this fellow, nor with any man. I will play for the whole stake. I will be all or nothing. I will be the Earl of Beverly and master of this inheritance, or I will blow my brains out. I will have no *middle* course. I won't go to this high-born minion to sue—and kneel—and to be spurned—pitied—*forgiven*, perhaps. D—n! He shall learn what it is to deal with *a man*. I play for the whole, and wo betide—”

“Edward, my son—my beloved son, you rave—you are mad—you know not what you say—what you do. I will comply with *all* your wishes. I am guilty—I will become more so—I will live in anguish—I will die in despair—only do not look on me in that frightful manner!”

“Then listen to me! Claude Wyndham must be put out of the way!”

Lady Beverly turned pale, and sunk back upon the sofa.

“*What* do you mean?” she faltered forth; “would my son become an *assassin*? Rather than that, I will myself seek him—I will tell him all—I will—”

A fierce blow from the hand of her desperate son nearly struck her down, and she staggered back upon the sofa.

“Oh God!” she cried, covering her face with her hands, “do not take me yet!”

“You drive me to desperation,” muttered Elkington, with a sulky composure; “and when I am goaded—you wonder—you—”

There was a dead pause.

“Forgive me, my mother!” said Elkington, tears springing from his eyes; “some demon has possessed me.”

Lady Beverly made no reply; but the deadly paleness of her neck, ears, forehead, and all that her hands, still pressed against her face, suffered to be visible, and of the hands themselves, showed the effect which this act had had upon her.

"Forgive me!" said Elkington. "Forget it! Forgive me, my mother! I am a brute."

"I forgive you, Edward," said Lady Beverly, in a voice altered with agony, and yielding one of her hands to his grasp; "but forget, alas! it is not in my power. I forgive you, for I am myself to blame. These fierce passions, unbridled by principle or religion—that fearful disrespect of all things, human and divine—it is I who have suffered them to reach their present state unchecked. I forgive you, my poor, my wretched son."

"Then hear me," said he, "and hear me with calmness; and, since you see the violence of my temper—which I know as well as any one, but which I cannot now help—do not oppose me. I cannot bear contradiction. I cannot, and I will not."

"I will be in your hands as wax," said Lady Beverly.

"Then hear me. I have no design of taking the life of my arch enemy but in an honourable way—in such a way as becomes a gentleman—and as *gentlemen* acknowledge to be right and necessary. He shall meet me. He shall, or I will pursue him like a bloodhound."

"He will not."

"But I tell you he *shall*; no man can refuse if another chooses to pursue him. If he does, it *must* be at the sacrifice of his honour—his fame—his place in society—his friends—the respect of men—the companionship of women. I have sworn he shall meet me, and he shall. The annuity allowed him by my father shall be instantly stopped. It will leave him a beggar, and perhaps in debt. I will drive him to desperation and destitution; and,

since he has chosen to insult me in so open a way, as *no man* shall do and live, I feel myself excusable in going to any extremity. Once in the field, it shall be my care to silence his claim, and then no one stands between me and my rights."

"You must choose your own course," said Lady Beverly; "I have said what *I* should do. But *you* are now the master, and I will not oppose you."

"Good-by, then," said Elkington, "for the present; I have letters to write."

Lady Beverly left the room; but, having passed the door, she looked back. Elkington had already sat down and seized a pen. She gazed at him a moment, raised her eyes to heaven full of tears, and a deep sigh broke from her bosom as she slowly withdrew to hide, in her own room, her various emotions.

Elkington wrote a letter, sealed it, and handed it to Scarlet, with orders to put it instantly into the post. Having finished this brief task, he mounted his horse, and dashed off into the endless and shadowy alleys of the Park, to lose, if possible, in rapid motion the sense of his perilous position. He had no sooner gone than a form crept stealthily from under the bed, and Carl, with a silent caution which eluded all observation, his face somewhat pale with the interest excited by what he had heard, glided out of the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE letter which Claude had taken from Elkington he sent again, by a more faithful messenger, to Count Carolan, without stating anything of the scene which we have described respecting it. The same hour he received a challenge from little

General Le Beau. The general was made acquainted with the resolution of Claude not to receive it.

The alternative to meet Le Beau himself was then submitted to him. This was also politely declined; upon which General Le Beau declared his intention to horsewhip Mr. Wyndham in the street, if he did not punish him more seriously.

"I shall certainly horsewhip you or shoot you," said General Le Beau, with a nervous twist of the body, which awkward habit he had acquired from the wound already mentioned.

"I am extremely obliged to you," said Claude, "for notifying me of your intention; and as being shot, from what I see, is a disagreeable thing, I shall instantly take measures to protect myself from a calamity which seems as little favourable to grace as temper."

"You are a *coward*, sir!" said Le Beau. The fierce little general believed that this word would cause his antagonist to explode like a powder-magazine at the application of a torch; and he even stepped slightly back, as if, being secure of his ultimate course, he was willing, either from curiosity or prudence, to observe, at a reasonable distance, the first burst which was to follow this cabalistic epithet. Though obviously prepared to be astonished, his surprise more than equalled his anticipations, when, instead of turning deadly pale or furiously red, trembling in the knees, and endeavouring to knock his (the general's) brains out or his own with the first adequate utensil within his reach, Wyndham, with a very quiet smile and a wave of the hand, which actually had some appearance of being intended for satirical, replied,

"You will not be offended, general, if I remark, that I differ from your opinion of me as much as I do from that which you appear to entertain of yourself."

"You shall be *posted*, sir!" said the general, with a prodigious twist; "and since, sir, you are—"

"I am *very* sorry, general," said Claude, "to be unable at present to listen to your interesting observations, especially as your ideas are so extremely sensible. I have at present the misfortune to be occupied with more important duties. There is one thing, however, upon which I should really like your candid opinion."

"I am not afraid to give my opinion upon any subject, and to stand by it like a gentleman," said the general, with a formidable frown.

"Well, then, you have, I believe, had time to examine fully the *interior* of my apartment. I now wish you to direct your attention to—"

"To what, sir? to what, sir?" demanded the general, the gash upon his cheek becoming doubly inflamed by the effects of rage.

"The *outside*!" said Mr. Wyndham, rising quietly and opening the door.

The formidable little man opened his eyes, or, rather, his eye, for one of them was so drawn down by the wound as to be always extended to about twice the size of its companion; and never did Jupiter, in one of his grand fits of fury, look more indignant and threatening. Luckily, however, he possessed his rage without his thunder. If he *had* been gifted with that dangerous weapon, at Claude's order to his servant to show the general down stairs! our hero's merriment would have probably received a check which must have ended him, and these volumes as a consequence. It was evident that the general had some desperate intention; so, while he was gone to render an account of his mission to Elkington, Claude quietly presented himself at the police, and laid a statement of the affair before that tribunal, after which General Le Beau gave him no farther trouble. On meeting him in the street a few days afterward, he looked exceedingly ferocious, and gave an unusually violent twist with his body, which, with his wounded cheek, rendered him a formidable

object, although his enmity did not proceed farther than several glances of a decidedly indignant kind. The general was subsequently heard to say, that, if it had not been for the interference of the police, he would have sent Monsieur *Claude Wyndham* to the devil, *au plus vite!* He at the same time lamented that he lived in an age so far sunk in barbarism as not to allow intrepid little generals like him to shoot people, without subjecting them to that sort of ungentlemanly annoyance.

Claude had scarcely arranged this affair, which he did much to his amusement, and without making any mention to the police of Elkington, when he received a roughly-written, dirty note in German. It was from a stranger, in the following words :

“MR. CLAUDE WYNDHAM :

“SIR: I take the liberty of addressing you, to ask you to come to my house and visit a certain Monsieur Rossi, a teacher of languages, who lies at my lodgings in a very distressed state. He has begged me to send for you, as he says, although but slightly acquainted with you, you are the only person in town of whom he dare ask a favour, or who knows anything of him. You can see him at any time.

“Your obedient servant, etc., etc., etc.”

This letter was odd, and, taken in connexion with his last night's adventure in the Park, might possibly be a snare. He knew no Monsieur Rossi, and at first he determined not to go. In a few moments, however, he took a different view of the subject. This might be some poor fellow in distress, from which his hand might relieve him; and the idea of leaving unnoticed an appeal from some unhappy being, perhaps on the bed of death, who had selected him from the crowd as one not likely to be callous to such an appeal, induced him to change his

mind. It was late in the day, and nearly the hour of dinner; but, having no other occupation, he determined to go at once. He had not walked far, when he met Digby, who was passing him without recognising him, so busily was the poor fellow engaged in his own thoughts. Whoever watches the ever-flowing current of a city population, will often observe persons who, although borne by their corporeal legs along the street and through the crowd, are, in fact, as far as their minds are concerned, acting some part in a different scene. Many go on talking to themselves, moving their lips, and showing, by the changes of their features, how entirely they are absorbed in their own cogitations. Digby was one of these. As he went by he was evidently engaged in some violent imaginary dispute, probably with Mrs. Digby, or perhaps with Elkington, who now received a more fluent setting-down than he had been able to give him on the real occasion of their quarrel. His brows were contracted, his face was red, his lips were in rapid motion, and he was swinging his arms backward and forward, not without their occasionally and unconsciously coming in contact with a passer-by; more than one face was turned to take a second look at him. The shopkeepers, lounging at their doors, arched their eyebrows; and more than one little boy—those acute observers—stopped to gaze with astonishment into his face; and, when he was at a reasonable distance, gave a hearty laugh or a loud whoop, which the honest fellow little thought directed against himself. Suddenly he appeared in the crisis of his conversation, and, inattentive to everything else, he strided on in the path of a rough-looking man, who turned out half way, but against whom, notwithstanding this courtesy, Digby ran with such force that each was whirled round by the violence of the collision. The stranger turned back, with a fierce countenance and clinched fist, and demanded in German

what he meant. Digby stood stupidly gazing at his angry face. The question was repeated in a more furious tone, and answered in English with a stammering hesitation which would have rendered any language unintelligible; and the insulted pedestrian, losing patience at the idea that the insult was intentional, seized Digby by the collar, amid a crowd which had already begun to collect, and was in the act of inflicting a summary vengeance, when Claude stepped up to his relief. He explained that he was a stranger, ignorant of the language, and that he could answer for his absence of mind, which had occasioned the accident. The good man willingly received the apology from one of Claude's appearance and manners, and respectfully assured him of his satisfaction. The parties separated, the crowd dispersed, and Digby said he would accompany Claude on his walk.

"Did you ever see such—a—a—born fools," said Digby, "as these Germans are? Only to—to think, now, of that great fellow setting on me in that style. In England such a thing would be impossible."

"In England he would probably have knocked you down without a word!" said Claude.

"Well—if he had—I should have had—him up—and—a—a—punished him. But here—no laws—no newspapers—no courts—no Parliament—no—a—a—no nothing."

"You must not be so severe upon my good friends here," said Claude; "and remember that a poor Prussian in London would be even worse off than you are here."

"Ah! if I could catch one of these fellows there, wouldn't I let him have it? Why, I haven't met one here who hasn't either—a—a—cheated me—a—a—kicked me, or tried to knock me—a—a—down. It's infamous! I think I've done with travelling *this* king's reign. So I've made up my mind, and I'm going up to London."

“But will madam consent?”

“I’ve turned over a new leaf with Mrs. D——. She’s a woman, and women are all alike, and must be treated in the same way. They must be governed. Don’t you think so?”

“Why, as to their being all alike——” said Claude, Mrs. Digby’s form recurring to his memory by the side of Ida’s.

“Oh, I mean,” interrupted Digby, “not in person; some are tall—some are short—some lean—some fat—some handsome—and some ugly; but I mean in their hearts. Come afoul of any of their kinks, and they’re as like as two peas. They’re all of ’em *women*—and that’s the whole of it.”

“They certainly are women,” said Claude, “but we must, on that account, not be too hard upon them. Heaven has made them of a finer material—a more fragile construction—and we should accommodate ourselves” (he was thinking of Ida) “to their softer and more delicate natures.”

“Why, so I do,” said Digby; “but, d—n her! it’s of no use. ‘Delicate nature!’ ‘fragile construction!’ Ah! if you had to deal with my wife *one week!*”

“Pooh! pooh! I should get along with her charmingly.”

“Egad, I should like to see you try it. She? the devil himself couldn’t manage her. If she gets a knot in her head, there it sticks, in spite of the old Satan. She’s now got an idea that she is a fine woman—her head’s as full as it can cram of *ho-tong*—and *bong-tong*—and *boo-monde*—and all that sort of thing. Then she thinks to marry Mary to a lord, and that Elkington is to be the man. Now, between you and me, I wouldn’t have that fellow in my house. He’s a—a—” (Digby looked around to assure himself that the formidable object of his displeasure might not be within hearing) “a puppy, and thinks just as much of marrying Mary as he

does her interesting mamma. I've told Mrs. Digby so—but no, nothing'll do. She must push into every—a—a—*soirry* where she can get an invitation. There she goes a gallivanting about with old Beeswax."

"Beeswax?"

"Yes, old 'long pockets'—Lippe, you know—a buying all sorts a things—and she's got all the milliners and mantuamakers in Berlin about her—and she and Moll are so transmogrified, that, egad, I don't know 'em when I meet 'em in the street. What do you think I caught 'em at yesterday?"

"Indeed, I hope nothing seriously disagreeable."

"Yes, very seriously. I returned home from a ride, and went into my wife's room. There she stood—half undressed—and Mary in the same predicament; and by their side—what do you think?—a man, sir—a great man—with a pair of mustaches as long as my arm—a standing between them—as—cool, sir—as—as a—a cucumber; pleasant, wasn't it?"

"A man!"

"A man, sir—a tailor, sir—a *lady's* tailor! While I was staring at him the door opened, and old 'long pockets' poked *his* ears in, walks me up to the ladies, with a pair of gamborge coloured gloves on—and they in that situation. They had sent for him to *enterpret* for them. I stood by, and heard 'long pockets' explaining to the tailor how their frocks were to be cut higher here—and lower there—and not to have any wrinkles in this place—and to be made a little fuller in that. If you catch me a travelling for pleasure again, you may eat me, sir."

"Oh, nonsense; you're too serious about it."

"The tailor had no sooner gone than in steps a strapping fellow dressed like a duke, and with a pair of mustaches that you might have tied in a bowknot behind his ears—the fellow! and down sat my interesting females to have their heads dressed, and a bushel basket full of wheat, and flowers, and

things stuck in. 'Madam Digby,' says I, 'ain't you ashamed of yourself—to admit men—in this fashion into—into your room?' 'Good gracious, John,' says she, 'how can you be such an awful fool?' You know that's a very favourite expression of hers. 'Don't you see,' says she, 'these poor creatures are no more than dumb beasts, and don't understand a word we say!' 'And, papa!' says Mary, 'everybody does so—and what everybody does can't be wrong!' Then comes a bill for dresses, three hundred thalers—then a subscription ticket for the theatre and the opera—and the French theatre. Then their learning to play whist—and Mrs. Digby loses a few guineas a night; and, to cap all, some fellow is a going to give a *ball costumy*, and Mary's going as *Hebe*, and Madam Digby as *Mary, Queen of Scots*."

"I should think Mrs. Digby would look *Queen Elizabeth* better," said Claude, smiling.

"No, sir—she'll look back to London—that's what she'll look—and old 'long pockets' 'll look for some other place. I've cut the French. It's the greatest trash on earth. Did you ever candidly see such a pack of stuff as it is? If these fellows can get a *que*—and a *se*—and a *lui*, and a *y* huddled in, neck and heels together, and always the cart before the horse, they think they're elegant; and then old 'long pockets'—how horribly he talks through his nose! He never says *no*—he says *non* so *non*. I believe that's one reason he has such large nostrils. The fellow has them like a horse. He kept me half an hour the other day trying to say *non*. I wouldn't do it, sir."

"I fear you have not been much pleased with Berlin."

"Berlin—I utterly detest it! I don't understand anything nor anybody. There isn't a newspaper that I can read—a sign that I can make out—all the bills and things pasted up along the street. There, now! look at all that trash yonder!—see that!—

that's all Greek to me—though there's always a crowd about them a reading them with their mouths wide open. I can't buy anything, for they don't understand me. When a bill comes in, I pay it without knowing what it is ; and I've no doubt I pay one two or three times over. Yesterday I walked out and came to a place where there were a thousand people collected—all greatly excited about something. 'What's the matter here?' says I, forgetting that the poor wretches couldn't speak English. The man began palavering to me, with his eyes starting out of his head, and pointed at somebody who was going along. 'Thank you, sir,' says I, 'for your information.' Then I asked another—and another ; no one could talk to me in a civilized tongue. All of a sudden, up jumped a great big fellow on a barrel—and began to shout. The crowd gathered around him, I among the rest. He went on at a violent rate for five minutes, then they all began to clap. He went on a little longer, then they set up a laugh ; and when he had said something more, they gave three cheers, and then cleared out. Now what the devil all that was about, I shall never know to my dying day. 'Give me old England yet,' says I. But *this* I found out a short time after, namely, that my watch was gone. Some infernal, infamous scoundrel had picked my pocket."

"Oh, you must not mind these trifles!" said Claude ; "when you are an older traveller, you'll think nothing of them."

"I don't know what you call trifles—but I don't call them—a—a—any such things. Last night I went to the opera alone. I went into the pit, and it being early, I got a good seat near the stage. Just as the house was full, there came a man and—a—a—began to talk to me. I told him I couldn't understand him, and there was no use o' his going on. But, notwithstanding that, he continued a talking on, louder and louder ; and at length, taking me by the

shoulder, hauled me out of my seat, and shoved me along away to the back part of the pit, where I couldn't see anything, pointing at the same time to a number on the seat and to a number on the ticket I had given him."

"Have you been much into society lately?"

"No; once I allowed my women to wheedle me into one *soirry*, and that was the last. Why, sir, the people that knew me perfectly well in my own house wouldn't speak to me. 'Can you tell me who yonder gentleman is?' said I to one. 'Bon soir,' said he, and he passed me. 'Are we to have a supper?' said I to another. 'Bon soir,' said he, and off shot *he*. 'Good-evening,' said I to a lady whom I had talked to half an hour the evening before. She opened her eyes, looked right over my shoulder, and began a talking to a big man behind me in a uniform. 'Well,' says I, 'don't be discouraged,' says I to myself; so I went up to a very remarkably civil young gentleman, who had come to my house with Elkington—drank my Champagne, and won ten Louis of me at whist—with an eye-glass stuck into his cheek, and held up by wrinkling his eyebrow over it, without holding on to it with his fingers. 'This is rather a curious sort of a company,' says I to the very civil young gentleman; 'don't you think so, Mr. Whattle?' What do you think he did?"

"Contradicted your opinion, I suppose," said Claude.

"No, sir—he wheeled about—stuck his face right plump into mine—peering at me through his glass, with his eyebrow all wrinkled up; so, egad, I thought he was going to butt me over like a ram, after regarding me a little while in this way, so that he will know me again if he meets me in Jerusalem; and, just as I had began to smile in a very familiar way, and held out my hand, thinking he was a going to say, 'How are you, my dear Digby—is this you?' what do you think he did?"

"Turned away, I suppose," said Claude, scarcely suppressing a smile.

"Flat as a flounder!" said Digby, in a tone of indignation; "and, holding out his hand to a person standing next to him, he says, says he, 'Devilish hot! ain't it?' says he. 'Devilish!' says the other; and then he told another fellow on the other side of me that he had called on him that afternoon, and the other fellow said he was '*enchanté*.' Do you think I'll submit to such impertinence? Not I."

At length they reached the house designated by the note. It was a wretched building; a filthy gutter ran from the court into the street through the archway which formed the principal entrance. The walls were dirty, black, and dilapidated, the stairs broken and unswept, the doors hanging on one hinge, the court full of offals and stagnant water. When they arrived at the third story, they were received by a man of indigent appearance, and ushered into rooms desolate and almost unfurnished. On making particular inquiries respecting the young invalid, the good man informed him that this poor fellow was a teacher of languages, who had lived with him for a long time, exciting his curiosity by his eccentricities; at first he denied himself the common comforts of life, but laid out what little money he could gain at his precarious occupation on his toilet.

"He seemed always particularly anxious to appear well dressed," said the man; "in this, for some time, he succeeded, but latterly he had grown less and less tidy; his old and much-worn clothes were no longer renewed. His manners, from cheerful gayety, became deeply serious. He avoided all society and amusement, and appeared plunged in profound grief. One day, not long ago, he had been brought home in a state of insensibility, which was succeeded by a raging delirium. He screamed and raved all night. He had no money to pay a physi-

cian, and I was as poor as he. We thought of carrying him to the asylum for lunatics, on the idea that he had grown mad, when his malady took a new turn; he became dangerously ill, grew weak and subdued, and gave us no farther trouble than the necessity of taking care of him and feeding him. I would willingly continue to do this, sir," continued the poor man, "for I never saw a more unhappy creature, and I sincerely pity him; but I am a poor labourer myself, and have a wife and child also, occupied with their own tasks; we have no time, and no money to spend upon him more; and we were thinking of having him removed to the hospital, when he got an inkling of our design, which I believe he did by listening through the keyhole—for he's as cunning as a fox. He taxed me with it; begged, entreated, and prayed so earnestly that we would spare him from such a fate—for I think, sir, he has an idea that being in an hospital is worse than it is—that I told him, if he had means of paying anything, ever so small, for his board and lodging—if he had any friend who would aid him, I would consent to charge nothing for trouble, and to take care of him ~~without profit~~, only in case of being secured against loss. Well, he then said there was a gentleman who perhaps would assist him if he knew his situation, and he mentioned the name of Mr. Claude Wyndham; a name which, in his delirium, he had often uttered in many various tones."

"Indeed!" said Claude. "This is strange. I am not aware that I know any such person."

"So, in short, sir, I took the liberty of complying with his request, and sending you a note. He told me your address himself. Now, sir, I would only say that, unless you are prepared to do something for the poor devil, you might as well not see him; for he counts upon you. He told me that you were rich, and had powerful friends, and that you could easily gratify his wishes. Will you see him, sir?"

I really do not believe he will tax your charity long."

Claude explained this to Digby, and asked him if he would go in.

"A—a—I—a—beg your pardon," said the latter, looking at his watch. "I am—a—a—I have an appointment at this very moment—and I shall have to go a mile. You must excuse me from going in to see this poor creature. Besides, I cannot bear—any—a—a—scene of distress. It always hurts—a—my feelings. But don't let me—a—interrupt you. Probably he has something to say to you in private. Good-morning. Adieu."

And, with some marks of precipitation, he withdrew.

Claude drew an unfavourable opinion of his friend's character from this little incident; for, under all his stupidity and vulgarity, he had conceived an idea that he was generous and charitable. Being, however, thus deserted, he allowed himself to be ushered into the patient's room. It was a sad home for any one, but struck Claude's feelings with peculiar mournfulness when he reflected that it was the abode, and perhaps the last one on earth, of the dying. There was no furniture but a rough pine-board bedstead and a wooden bench. The cobwebs hung around the smoked and broken ceiling, and the summer light and fresh air were kept out of the little window by a high black wall which excluded the view. Upon this miserable pallet lay a young man of a sallow and pale complexion, much emaciated, and so absorbed in thought that he was totally unconscious that any one had interrupted his gloomy solitude. His hair was black, and very thick and long. His large and dark eyes were fixed upon the ceiling as he was extended on his back. His beard was unshorn, and had grown rank and stiff about his cheeks, mouth, and throat. A faint recollection of such a countenance, scarcely recognisable through the alterations of disease and the over-

grown beard, crossed Claude's mind ; and the invalid, at a gentle shake from his host, had no sooner started, turned his eyes towards the new-comers, and fixed them with a stern and bewildered look on Claude, than he recognised the young man whom he had first seen planted before the portrait of Ida ; whom he had afterward met in the same place and position ; who had so oddly deceived him as to the original of the portrait ; and who, Ida had informed him, was her Italian master. The recognition was mutual ; and a faint suffusion of red over the pallid countenance of the invalid, succeeded almost immediately by a hue more ashy than before, indicated that he knew his guest, and that his image called up some agitating reflection.

"How strange !" said the young man ; "I didn't think you'd come. I never had any claim on *you* ; but something whispered me to try you—to catch at *you*, as a drowning man catches at a spar. Oh, sir, what must you think of me ?"

"My friend," said Claude, with much sympathy, "you are unfortunate, and ill ; and you have done very right to claim the assistance of others. I beg you will not distress yourself, or excite yourself to speak. I have heard your whole story from your friend here ; and I agree to furnish you the means not only to remain here, but, if you please, to seek more comfortable lodgings."

"God bless you ! You are the only being on all this wide and crowded earth that—some angel surely whispered me to send for you—but you have *not* heard my whole story."

"Well, well, some other time ; now you are weak ; you are—"

"Some other time may be too late," said the young man, peevishly ; "I do not believe I am long for this world. I must tell you now, and the more so as my story partly concerns yourself."

"What can you mean ?"

Rossi motioned the landlord to retire, and they were alone.

“There is something about you, Mr. Wyndham, which makes me feel I can unbosom myself to you—my weaknesses—my crimes even—without being ridiculed or betrayed. Perhaps I may have assistance from your hand or counsel from your lips. There is something in you which gives me confidence. I shall therefore tell you my story. It deeply concerns you, and I tell it partly in gratitude, and partly to relieve my own bosom.”

Claude for a moment forgot the invalid in the interest excited by his words. Confused hopes that something respecting his family might be the subject of the promised revelation—that it might refer to the late mysterious attempt upon his life—in short, he scarce knew what to think, and he betrayed his curiosity in his countenance.

“I came to Berlin,” said Rossi, “from France, a poor exile. Count Carolan, to whom I had been recommended, employed me as the Italian master of his daughter; for I am Italian by birth and education, though I have spent the latter years of my life in France, and there rendered myself obnoxious to a great man, who compelled me to abandon the country at the peril of the Bastile. For two years I was in the habit of reading one hour a day with the young Countess Ida. We read the most eloquent and romantic works in our literature. I was friendless and wretched, and very soon after we commenced our lessons, the beauty and character of my young pupil began to sink into my heart like enchantment. We were almost alone at these periods. Madame Wharton always sat with us, but neither she nor Ida dreamed of the feelings I concealed under my calm, cold manner, needy dress, and respectful air. I was thus often left, by a fearful and fatal privilege, to watch daily—at my leisure—in almost uninterrupted solitude, the bewildered

ing charms of a mind and form, for which half the nobility of Berlin sighed—for one familiar hour in whose company many a young *noble* would have perilled his life. She was with me all grace, modesty, and gentle sweetness. There was no reserve—no pride—no supercilious dignity in her demeanour. She was kind and unguarded before me as if I had been a brother. My very insignificance gained me her bounty, and created a kind of delightful intimacy, fascinating and dangerous beyond my power of resistance. She was also the only female I spoke to—the only friend I had. Her sunshiny and loving nature made her take an interest in me—from my history—my loneliness—my extreme melancholy—and perhaps, unsuspected by herself, from the deep fervour of my respect and submission to her. It sometimes happened, at moments, that our minds and souls met in a kind of equality over some scene in poetry—of intellectual beauty—of passionate love. Then we conversed together in my own language, as two young girls might upon such subjects—of the world—of the vicissitudes and distinctions of society. It seemed to me, sometimes, that she blushed to find that fate had placed her on such an elevation of rank and fortune, and that her heart wandered beyond their gorgeous precincts, to seek simple nature and sweet human happiness, as they lie around the steps and in the heart of cottage maidens.”

There was something in this rhapsody of Rossi that awakened singular emotions in the heart of Claude, and, at the same time, exceedingly interested him in the ardour and eloquence with which the poor fellow opened his history.

“No one can conceive,” continued Rossi, “the deep enchantment of these interviews to me. The hour spent with her was the only one of the twenty-four not a burden. It was the single star in the sky elsewhere blank. It was the ray of sunshine

in the subterranean dungeon of the captive; the sole link which holds him from utter darkness, and connects him with earth and heaven. Month after month rolled away—oh God! how sweetly. I had the address to conceal the fire in my veins, though it only burned stronger for being hidden. Her numerous acts of bounty, sympathy, and gentle consideration only added to its power. She had no prejudices—no pride. She bestowed upon me the same real courtesy which she would have bestowed upon a prince; which, by the absence of formality, was only the more ravishingly sweet to my soul. All other human beings were to me despots, tyrants, and fiends. They frowned on me—trampled on me—put me aside as a useless, worthless thing. Among them I shrank—I crawled—I skulked like a beaten dog. I hated the very sight of my fellow-beings worse than a boar or an adder. Oppression and poverty had taken from my spirit its natural courage and erectness, and made me such a sycophant that I loathed myself. It was only with her that I felt myself a human being, and formed in the image of *Him* who made my soul immortal. Yes, the truth at last forced itself upon me. I *loved* this young girl. A blissful madness took possession of me. I never thought how it was to end; that I must one day be separated from her, and banished from her presence, even when residents of the same city, as effectually as if I had been in another continent. I never thought that she regarded me as she might have done, a poor mendicant, totally unconscious that my ideas were other than to receive the recompense of my daily toils, and that I was pleased when it was given kindly. I never imagined that this sweetness—these gentle words—these sunshiny smiles, were not mine alone, but were only shed around on the common air, as the perfume of a flower or the beams of a star. It never occurred to me that this light and happy being

might—nay, must, at some time—love—and love *another*—till, one day, I came at my usual hour, and entered the boudoir where I usually gave my lesson. She was not there. I found myself alone, in that gorgeous and hallowed spot, full of traces of her hand and tokens of her presence. Her drawings—her music—her paintings—her books—her flowers—her writing utensils—her gloves—her embroidery. Sweet objects! they filled my heart with joy, and my eyes with tears. I could not but offer up my humble prayer to Heaven, that, although this beloved creature was not destined for me, I was thus permitted to see her sometimes—to behold the places she inhabited—the things she touched. I approached some of them. I kissed them with wild rapture. The guilty stealth with which I did this inflamed my soul to go on farther with my tender thefts. I pressed her embroidery against my bosom. I approached a rose; it leaned, sweet and odorous, amid the fresh verdure. I touched its cool leaves with my audacious and burning lips. I felt that I was embracing her image; the soothing odour I inhaled as her breath, and the soft and crimson leaves seemed her mouth. I fancied her soul was hidden in this half-opened flower. Lost in a kind of ecstasy, I cast my eyes upon her table. They fell upon a letter. It was addressed to her father. On the corner was your name. A half-instinctive, half-imagined dream that you had made an impression on her heart, had already crossed me. This letter recalled it to me, and made me start. It lay there like a snake amid the flowers. Suddenly her step was heard—light as the young fawn that scarcely brushes the morning dew; and a low-hummed air, from a voice that thrilled my heart, had the melody of the birds' warble in the silent wood."

"Poor fellow!" said Claude, his eyes scarcely discerning the anguish-stricken countenance of the young madman through his rising tears.

“ I do not know what induced me to step back. Perhaps it was a sense of guilt. I felt like Satan caught in Paradise ; for I had become accustomed to consider my poverty as the bitter badge of meanness, misery, and shame. I stepped behind a heavy curtain. She entered and looked around. There is a sensation in watching a young girl like her, when she believes herself perfectly alone—a rapture I never felt before. It seemed as if I—an earthly wanderer—had, by some daring chance, climbed the gates of heaven and gazed into its sacred groves. Alas ! alas ! for such a blasphemy, the sudden thunder struck me. Breathless—trembling, I knew not why—I fixed my eyes upon her. She went to a broad mirror, and gazed a moment at her full-length form. She then took from her bosom a paper, and read aloud a verse. It was the tender blessing of a girl upon one unnamed. In the weakness and folly of my nature, I thought for one exquisite moment—and it almost paid me for any suffering—that I was shadowed forth in this short and girlish expression of feeling ; but, as she finished it, she reached forth her hand to the letter written by you—opened it—read your name aloud—and pressed it to her lips. The step of Madame Wharton startled her. She left the room by one door. I came from my place of concealment. Madame Wharton entered, and presently afterward Ida, once more all gentleness—all gayety—the little hypocrite !

“ We proceeded with our lesson, but the incident had almost unseated my reason. Madame Wharton sat at some distance with a book. Ida’s hand lay so near my own on the table as to touch it. Love and despair combined to take from me all command over myself. I determined that this should be the last time I should see her, but that I would not leave her without once touching that charming hand with a kiss of love. The impu-

dence—the folly—the guilt of such an act did not restrain me. I was mad. I knelt at her feet—I seized her hand—I raised it to my lips—I covered it with wild and burning kisses. She started back, turned very pale, and uttered a faint shriek.

“‘Mr. Rossi,’ said Madame Wharton, starting forward, with a dignity and indignation that abashed me at once, ‘*what* do you mean?’

“‘Farewell for ever!’ said I. ‘Forgive my delirium.’

“‘Unhappy boy,’ said Madame Wharton; ‘what fatal infatuation!’

“‘Yes—it is infatuation. It is—madness,’ said I; ‘but never more shall your sight be polluted by the presence of a wretch who must ever after be hated and despised.’

“I turned to leave the room, when Lord Elkington stood before me. He had seen the whole incident. He is a demon—that man; and, as such, one day I will pursue him. He advanced and took me by the throat. I was a child in his grasp. He dragged me to the door, and there *struck me*. The ruffian *struck me!*” The poor fellow’s face flushed crimson at the recollection. “A blow! and before *her!* I could not resent it. My life failed me. I rushed out of the house. I fell senseless long before I reached home. This is my story. I am dying. I shall not long be here, to suffer a life which has always been a shame and curse to me. Should I ever recover, my first task shall be to be revenged on Elkington. It is that alone which makes me wish for life. It is his heart’s blood which alone can wash out the stain I have received. I have now,” continued Rossi, sinking back exhausted on his pillow, “given you my history, and I don’t give it you for nothing! I expect that you will supply me with the comforts of life while life lasts. For my part, if I could but end at once the existence of Elkington and Ida—and my own—I should die

happy ; and that is my nightly dream and my daily prayer !”

It would be difficult to describe the emotion with which Claude heard this long recital, and the secret rapture which the passage concerning himself awakened in his heart. He *was*, then, beloved. He had but to present himself to Ida, and her innocent and gentle nature would not conceal the impulses of her soul. But the restraints upon him were invincible. He felt that, instead of triumphing, he ought to lament that he had so far won the affections of a young girl, whom her happiness, as well as his own duty, compelled him to desert, and to seem to betray. There were some parts of the narration, and particularly the manner of relating it, which suggested the idea that Rossi was not yet altogether in his right mind ; and that, in its turn, caused a doubt of the truth of the statement. He, however, assured him and the landlord that every care should be taken of him ; that he might send in bills to him to the amount of three thalers a week ; and that he would, in addition, procure him a physician, and certain other comforts. The landlord, on being called in, agreed to this proposition ; and Rossi discovering an inclination to sleep, Claude gave his card to the host, begging him to send for Doctor B—— in his name, and to let him know in case anything should occur. Thus having done everything for the present which he could think of towards satisfying both host and tenant, he retraced his steps towards home.

END OF VOL. I.

Handwritten signature or scribble, possibly reading "A. J. ..."

THE
C O U N T E S S I D A .

A T A L E O F B E R L I N .

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"NORMAN LESLIE," "DREAMS AND REVERIES OF
A QUIET MAN," &c.

I N T W O V O L U M E S .

V O L . I I .

N E W - Y O R K :
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THE
C O U N T E S S I D A .

CHAPTER I.

IT was six when Claude returned to his hotel. He was met at the door by his friend Denham, who had just arrived from London. Of all men, he was the one he most esteemed and loved. He was, in some respects, the antithesis of Claude, and it was, perhaps, this very difference which made them more attached to each other. He was totally without Claude's contemplative habits, but usually acted from impulses which, if not always prudent or wise, were always noble. He was frank, generous, and bold; full of strong affections and quick passions; a faithful friend, and a good hater. In one respect he differed widely from his friend. He held duelling to be a custom, under certain circumstances, sanctioned by necessity, and useful in its effects upon society. Without any particularly serious views of religion, he professed to believe that, in the present state of the world, the meek doctrines of Christianity were permitted at times to give way to other considerations bearing upon individual character and the general harmony of society; in short, he was also a duellist, though in a far different way from the debauched, vindictive, and cruel Elkington. The latter adopted the principle as a mode of shielding himself in a course of profligacy, and of acquiring a notoriety of which a purer mind or a more generous heart would have been ashamed; the former as a

means of protecting his person from insult and his name from calumny, and of redressing all unjust injuries directed either against himself or his friends. He thought the world was thronged with persons who might be regarded as beasts of prey, ready to attack those not prepared with means of physical defence, and that the same principle which permitted a traveller to use a pistol against a highwayman, allowed a resort to the same weapon against those who, by force or fraud, encroached too far on the rights and feelings of a gentleman. This subject had often been discussed between these two young men, who each respected, while he opposed the opinion of the other.

The delight of such a friendly meeting as now took place, chased from Claude the clouds with which his present painful position had long shaded his mind and countenance. Many and rapid were the inquiries and replies on either side; and, if anything could have added to their pleasure, it was the mutual discovery that each contemplated a tour into southern Germany, and to spend the winter in Italy. The proposition that Claude should join the party was at once made and accepted; and, while listening to the voice of true friendship, so rarely heard in the crowded halls of fashion, and thus opening to himself a prospect of freedom from the sad thoughts and humiliations which had so long oppressed him in Berlin, Claude already felt the weakness of yielding to despondency, and the certainty of finding contentment, if not happiness, elsewhere; even after having parted for ever from the object of his now so deep but melancholy love. It was not long before Denham had drawn from his ingenuous friend a clear account of what had happened since his last letter—of his almost formal dismissal by the Carolan family—of the malignant enmity of Elkington and his dark threats—and of the challenge and its refusal. He looked grave for a moment, and said,

“You must get away at once if you are determined to suffer this puppy to calumniate you with impunity;

and I fear also, lest, in some personal encounter, you might be placed in an awkward position."

"I fear nothing," said Claude, "and I will certainly make no open demonstration of a desire to avoid him. I have offered to Carolan all the necessary explanations respecting the falsehood of his charges, and I have openly pronounced them false. I am yet more than ever firmly persuaded, that a man who has nothing to reproach himself with, should, where legal redress is not advisable or possible, point to the tenour of a blameless life as the sole reply to passing slanders."

Denham shook his head.

"I have a great mind," said he, "and, were it not for Mary, I *would* make him eat his words myself. Even as it is—"

"No, Charles," said Claude. "Remember you are a husband, and have no right to risk your wife's happiness, whatever you may choose to do with your own."

"Well, then, let us get off as soon as possible; we will take a glance at Berlin, and arrange our *route* for the summer; but I shall expose this unprincipled ruffian—that is my duty, wherever I speak of him; and as for meeting such a blackleg, for he is nothing more, he must wash his hands clean from the stain of fraud upon them before he has a right to call upon me."

Mrs. Denham now entered, and welcomed Claude with a warmth which proved how sincerely he was esteemed where he was really known. With Mrs. Denham there was also a lovely little girl, her niece, whom these amiable people had adopted. Nothing could be more delightful than the attachment and sunshiny happiness which reigned continually in this little circle, where intelligent and cultivated minds were inspired by the best impulses that adorn the heart and character. Mrs. Denham was an extremely lovely person of three or four-and-twenty, with all the ease and charm of a fashionable woman, without her frivolity or pretension. The marriage had been one of mutual

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attachment, and now presented the agreeable spectacle of a union surrounded by a milder but deeper light of affection, in proportion as the mere illusions of love gave place to a truer knowledge of character, and a soberer but not less delightful appreciation of their relative position and merits. The little Ellen was an orphan, the daughter of Denham's brother, who had died without any fortune. She had been carefully educated, and was beloved and watched over with the tenderest care; and it was to recruit her health, which had been somewhat impaired by the closeness of her application at school, that she was permitted to enjoy the present excursion. It was, however, by no means a loss of time, as Mrs. Denham was peculiarly calculated to instruct her young charge in all the necessary branches, and, while she led her willing feet along the path of knowledge, to teach her correct habits of thinking and observing, to awaken and guide in her heart those impulses, and to instil into her mind those principles, without which the brightest talents and the fairest charms are worthless and dangerous.

For several days Claude occupied himself with his friends, in seeing the town and its environs. Now they walked in the beautiful gardens at Charlottenbourg, and now strolled through the royal grounds and gorgeous palaces of Potsdam, where the numerous tokens of the great monarch, philosopher, soldier, author, and statesman, whose spirit had recently quitted the earth, interested them extremely. All the curiosities usually shown to travellers were diligently explored, and many a merry party they had in the course of these toilsome but exciting labours; and in the afternoon, a drive around the Park or an evening at the opera furnished new variety to their amusements, and new and agreeable topics of conversation. In these constant rounds of occupation Claude almost forgot his situation. He found in the circle which gathered every day at dinner, that ease and unreserved gayety of private life, which pleased him more than all the

brilliancy and pomp of fashion amid which he had spent the winter. Here all things appeared in their true value. Rational standards of right and wrong were the criterions of action, and the heart expanded and opened its faculties in the warm temperature of friendship and the sober light of nature.

At length the day of departure was fixed, and all the necessary arrangements completed. On the afternoon previous they sat down to dinner for the last time in Berlin, and it was late ere they ceased the lively conversation to which all that they had seen and all that they expected to see gave rise.

"Well, here's a long adieu to Berlin," said Denham, "and a health to those who remain behind, except that scoundrel Elkington. You may be right, Claude, in letting him off; but, were I in your place—"

"That's Charles exactly," said Mrs. Denham; "I do believe he has a secret pleasure in being shot at. I am glad you are going with us. I am sure, Mr. Wyndham, you are too calm and reflective to suffer passion to hurry you into actions against right and reason. Some of your friends are not by half so sensible."

"Come, come, my love," said Denham, "no scandal."

"Aunt Mary is angry because uncle Charles was going to fight a duel," said Ellen, "before we left home."

"How dare you," said Charles, laughing, "betray your uncle in such a heinous offence? So tell Mr. Wyndham now the whole story, as a punishment, and see what he will say to it."

"A man said uncle Edward was no gentleman," said Ellen, coming up to Claude, who drew her towards him, much pleased with her countenance and manner; "and uncle Charles challenged him, and then the person begged his pardon, and said he *was* a gentleman."

"To be sure," said Charles, laughing, "and that illustrates my old opinion. Now there was a case,

Claude, where no alternative was left. Upon the fame of a *gentleman* no one should breathe a doubt. It should be distinctly understood that such an insult must be answered, and then there would be fewer evil tongues. If you permit a man to question your character as a gentleman with impunity, when will you stop him? from one word he will advance to broader ones—from invectives to distinct charges—and from them to—a blow, perhaps. If you are prepared, under any circumstances, to call a person to account, why not begin at the beginning? Why not refuse to permit the slightest indignity? Principle upon such a subject would be very well if you could carry it out. But since, in case of the last provocation, you *must* seek redress, the—”

“But I do not see why you *must*,” said Mrs. Denham.

“What, even where a blow—”

“Even a *blow*,” said she, “cannot excuse a man for committing an action which is at once foolish and wicked.”

“There, my love,” said Denham, “you must excuse me; a blow admits of no compromise or reflection; a blow is the worst insult which one man can inflict upon another. A blow I bear from no man; at the foot of the altar—from the hand of the priest or of a king, it must be punished. It puts consequences out of the question. It demands that every consideration in life should give way to an honourable, instant, and reckless demand for redress.”

“And yet our Saviour bore a blow,” said Mrs. Denham, “and mere mortals have had the greatness of mind to rise superior to such a humiliation, rather than commit a criminal or an unwise action. I do not see why a blow should be such a peculiarly unpardonable insult, or why, however much it merits proper retaliation and punishment, it should stand separate from other wrongs, and reduce him who has the misfortune to suffer it from the responsibilities and duties of a

rational being and of a Christian to a mere madman. I do not see why an appeal to the laws may not be made in this case with as much propriety as in any other. A highwayman robs you of your money—a swindler defrauds you in a lawsuit—a man borrows money of you and refuses to pay—a person slanders you or your friends—an incendiary sets your house on fire—all these are wrongs, but you do not feel bound to abandon your interests here and hereafter for the sake of taking from the law the task of punishing the aggressors; but a frantic madman—perhaps inebriated, and not knowing what he does—dashes his hand into your face, and straightway you profess to have received such a stain in your character, such an injury in your reputation, as must be remedied by committing what is really a crime.”

“It is infamy,” said Denham; “and what is life without honour?”

“And how is honour compromised by a blow?” demanded Mrs. Denham. “Does it make you less honest or noble in yourself? Does it make you treacherous, impure, intemperate, or in any way abased or wicked? Does it alter your affections or violate your duties? Does it afflict you with a vice or deprive you of a virtue? for, remember, I am not requiring you to bear blows without that sensibility which preserves the proper pride and dignity of a man, or to bear them in any but a noble cause. How is a calm and virtuous mind, pressing on in an honourable career of wisdom, unfolding its powers, and occupied in strengthening and purifying itself and benefiting others—how is such a mind degraded by the touch of a thoughtless hand? Is it not an ennobling and almost a divine effort, which turns unresistingly from so rash and impotent an attack, and continues to occupy itself only with what is great and good? Be assured he has lived a doubtful or an insignificant life who is required to illustrate its purity or its courage by a duel. Believe me, my dear husband,” continued Mrs. Denham, with a tremulous

voice, "existence is a mighty and mysterious gift. It comes from the hand of God himself. Perhaps we do not, with all our wisdom, know its true meaning. Do not seek to destroy that of others for any human passion. The provocation in your last moment will show small beside the crime; and reserve your own life for the duties attached to it. If a man be a coward, taking life for a blow will not give him courage. If he be not, enduring it will not make him one. How wisely might every young malapert of the present day, whose thoughts are of pistols, death, and eternity, on the slightest casual occasion, take a lesson from the calm old Greek, who said, 'Strike, but hear me!'"

"My sweet Mary," said Denham, as he regarded the bright eyes and heightened colour of his wife with admiration, "you speak well—you speak eloquently—but you speak like a woman. Our Saviour, it is true, bore a blow, but our Saviour was a *God*; we are men."

"And yet, did we but know it," said Mrs. Denham, "we have within us the power to follow in the footsteps of that Divine Master, who descended to earth that we might imitate his example. If men would only study the *spirit* of that religion—if a few, even, would *dare* to think and act for themselves, and to present the sounding reply of an irreproachable life to all that attacked reputation—this—this, indeed, would be *courage*. Am I not right, Mr. Wyndham?"

"I am certain," said Denham, "that Wyndham, with all his self-control and determination, would consider himself bound to resent a blow to the last extremity."

"I do not see," said Claude, "what there is in the blow of a frantic fool, to absolve from the rules of right and wrong, or to alter the tenour of a great soul and a rational mind. The extreme sensibility on this point is a mode of feeling—a remnant of barbarism. He who conducts himself as he ought to do, will rarely be in a position to receive a blow; and when in such a position without fault of his own, he discovers more courage in bearing than in blindly resenting it."

"Come," said Denham, "you are cunning reasoners, both of you; but I suspect neither knows what the feelings and actions of a man would, or ought to be, on such an occasion. Theory is one thing, and practice another. And as for me, I really don't see the use of making ourselves uncomfortable by reasoning on matters which in no way concern us."

"There is this use," said Claude, "that when a man has determined how he would act in certain cases, upon the occurrence of these cases his steps, instead of being committed to headlong passion, are guarded by the cool decision of his temperate moments, and he is saved by the hand of *principle* from plunging down a precipice."

"Well! well! we are too serious," said Denham, gayly. "Come, fill your glass, Wyndham! let us leave blows and quarrels to those who are threatened with them. For my part, now I am a Benedict, I shall keep away from troubled waters. I may not determine to let any one strike me who pleases; and, if forced into a quarrel, I may not choose to sneak out of it; yet, to *avoid* a quarrel, I would do as much as any man. I hold with old Poloneus:

"'Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee.'

"Come, success to our new undertaking, and may we all live a thousand years!"

CHAPTER II.

CLAUDE now rose to leave the table. It was eight o'clock, and he had resolved to go this evening, for the last time, into society in Berlin. After all that had occurred, he did not wish to leave town clandestinely, but to take this occasion to bid farewell to such of his

friends as were not alienated by the slanders of his enemy, and to steal one more look at her who filled his soul with tender anguish. He had not seen Carolan for some time, nor the countess, nor Ida. He knew that the challenge from Elkington, which he had refused, had already become the topic of conversation. The fierce little general, disappointed in his intention of proceeding in the duel, or of taking summary vengeance upon Claude for the result of his mission, and the little respect with which the messenger had been received, found some vent for his fury in spreading everywhere the news of his enemy's cowardice and disgrace. As gentlemen may be very ready to fight duels and blow other gentlemen's brains out, and yet be capable of wide deviations from veracity, we must not be surprised to find that the doughty general garnished his recital with embellishments; and he was a great talker and knower to everybody. According to his account, "Mr. Wyndham had insulted his friend Lord Elkington, by calumniating him to Count Carolan, with the view of breaking off his approaching marriage with Ida; that he had, accordingly, borne a message from Elkington, upon receiving which Mr. Wyndham had become exceedingly pale and alarmed; and that, after having refused to fight, although urged to it by provocations which no gentleman could endure, and still refusing, he, the general, took his, Mr. Wyndham's, nose between his, the general's, fore and middle fingers, and pulled the same; and that the operation had been performed with so little resistance on the part of the *operatee*, that he should have repeated it at short intervals, when not otherwise engaged, wherever the said Wyndham presumed to show the said nose in society, only he, the said Wyndham" (and in this part of the account the general gave such huge twists with his body, and such ghastly contortions of his wounded cheek, as to render the description extremely lively and impressive), "had had the meanness—the cowardice—the—" (and here he used to make a pause, in con-

sequence of there not being any word in either the French or German language exactly strong enough to convey the full extent of his contempt for such conduct) "to go to the police and complain of a threatened assault; thus meanly and basely, and in a most ungentlemanly manner, preventing his being shot, or, at least, horsewhipped in the street the next morning, as, but for this, would have been the case."

The world at large are not unlike a flock of sheep in respect to the facility with which they may be induced to follow any one who undertakes to lead, especially in some unjust act or foolish opinion; and the general, by his earnest manner of censuring Claude for not permitting himself to be shot, induced most of his hearers to conclude that the act had been totally unwarrantable, and unworthy of a gentleman. This accusation, combined with the charges already in circulation against our hero, had completed his disgrace; and he was now almost universally set down as a person of no character, who had impudently thrust himself into society; in short, a mere "*chevalier d'industrie*." Several expressions of Count Carolan sanctioned these opinions. That gentleman, on discovering that Claude had dared to lift his thoughts to his daughter, fancied himself the object of as deep an insult as one man could offer to another; and, once admitting into his bosom the feeling of revenge, it mastered his weak mind, and became his predominant desire. If he could have crushed him into the dust, he would have done so. The letter sent him by Claude, containing that of Denham's, he returned unopened, and Claude received it as he was dressing to go to Count N——'s. He felt the insult, but he had made up his mind as to the course he should pursue, and he hoped in a week to turn his back upon Berlin for ever.

"Come what, come may," thought he, "I will meet these gay crowds once more. I will steal *one* more look at that fair—fair face, which I am never to see again, and then—hail! the future, and the past—adieu!"

While dressing, his servant brought him a newspaper, sent up by Denham. He unfolded it, glanced his eye across its pages, and was flinging it aside, when the name of the Earl of Beverly caught his eye, and he read the following :

“Death of the Earl of Beverly.—We regret to be obliged to announce the death of the Earl of Beverly, at his princely residence at L—, on Monday morning. The earl, who had been previously improving in health, on rising in the morning at his usual hour, fell suddenly to the floor in a fit, and expired before any assistance could reach him. An express was instantly sent off to the Continent to acquaint Lord Elkington and Lady Beverly, who are at Berlin.

“The late earl was born in 17—. In March, 17—, when only the Hon. Mr. Lawton, he married a Miss Carantz, a beautiful young orphan of Vienna. The match was one of inclination, but terminated unfortunately. A short time after their union, the bride, to whom he was attached with a fervour corresponding to his high powers of mind and peculiar ardour of character, quitted him, allured by the attractions of an ancient lover; and, after having afforded but too glaring evidences of a character singularly light, and a total disregard of her own honour and the peace of her husband, she carried with her a child not many months old, but neither the unfortunate infant nor its mother long survived; both having been lost at sea on a voyage to the West Indies. Having succeeded to the titles and estates of his father, the late —, he was subsequently created Earl of Beverly by his late majesty. After which he immediately married Miss Seymour, daughter of the distinguished General Seymour. Lord Elkington, now Earl of Beverly, the only son, is twenty-two years of age. He is daily expected with his mother from the Continent.”

Claude read this paragraph with a singular interest. He felt almost as if Providence were unjust to raise

the profligate duellist to opulence and honour, and to depress him, who had shown himself so ready to sacrifice even his reputation in the cause of right. How brilliant was now Elkington's prospect! The Earl of Beverly courted by all—his rank and wealth would gloss over the defects of his character. His gambling debts would be paid, and his misdemeanours hushed up. If Count Carolan before had been anxious for a union with him, he would now be much more so, and he would be little likely to listen to charges concerning him from one with whom he was already obviously offended. Ida would become the Countess Beverly. Blessed with everything to elate his spirits, and to swell his bold, bad heart with joy and triumph, he could go on for the future; perhaps, having no temptation to evil, he would endanger his reputation by no farther open acts of profligacy; while he himself, having openly branded him, would be regarded as a mean calumniator and a defeated rival.

As these reveries passed through his mind, he found himself at the house of Count N——, the —— minister. It was blazing with light and very crowded. It seemed all the world was there. Claude entered with a secret tremble at his heart, which belied his outward tranquillity. There are, perhaps, to a proud and noble mind, few ordeals more painful than that to which he had now voluntarily subjected himself; stranger as he was in Berlin, he had more of the support obtained by a long residence, and the consciousness that, whatever slanders might be circulated against him, enough of his real character must be known to create friends and defenders. The whisper—the doubt, is enough to shade the name of the stranger; and the open charges rung against him by Elkington, Le Beau, Lady Beverly, Thompson (for he had turned one of his bitterest detractors without the slightest apparent cause), and several others, almost entirely destroyed his standing. Few have the prudence or the benevolence to doubt a slander, or, at least, to omit to

circulate it until it is clearly proved, and Claude saw, the moment he entered the door, that he was a proscribed man. The Count and Countess N——, however, greeted him with affability. He was in their house on their invitation, and they were, moreover, people of refinement and kindness. They had heard the accusations against him, but they also had formed a friendship with himself more intimate than the ordinary acquaintanceships of the saloons, and they perceived and respected in him a man of obviously superior mind and elegant deportment. They knew also Madame Wharton's opinion of him; and with the power of appreciating character possessed by so few, they esteemed her as she merited. They perfectly understood, too, that Carolan was a man of the feeblest possible understanding, and a heart entirely given up to vanity; that Le Beau was an unprincipled rascal, who presumed to be very important on the score of having fought duels, and that Elkington was a desperate libertine. People of sense and observation find these things out by a thousand various trifles, and Claude therefore, with them, stood as before. They respected and admired him, and were too intelligent to be led away by a vulgar love of scandal to believe evil at the whisper of those who were themselves far from pure. Claude even found both the count and his lady more affable than usual. By a kind of generosity so rarely discovered, they seemed resolved to support the weaker party; to mark distinctly and publicly their dissent from the general opinion, of which they were not ignorant, and to sooth the wounds which they rightly judged were to be inflicted upon the heart of their young friend on this evening. Keen was the appreciation of this conduct, and deep the gratitude felt by Claude; and it enabled him to regain his full self-command, and, perhaps, materially supported him through the principal incident to which he was subsequently subjected. It is thus often with us in our daily actions which have consequences we cannot foresee.

his iron cage, with a tread and a heart that should be upon the burning desert, or the unexplored, unbounded wood. At length he threw himself upon the naked floor, conscious that movement only fanned the fire within him.

“A blow—a blow! Let me think of it!”

And, for a moment, the whirl and tumult of his mind subsided a little, and gave place to something like continuous reflection.

“No,” he thought, “it is a dream—that blasting stroke upon my brow—a dream?” He raised his hand to his face. He became conscious of a dim sense of pain now for the first time, and, on passing his fingers over it, he found the eye much swollen. He closed the other, and looked out of the window with that one injured. It was nearly deprived of sight. A vague appearance of light was all he could distinguish. The beautiful transparent air—the bending sky—the moon riding calmly over all the shocks of earth—they were lost and fused together, without beauty or separate distinctness. The idea struck him that perhaps the wound was irreparable; perhaps the eye was blind. No! no! it was no dream! It was a bitter, deliberate, public, burning insult. It was the most blighting act of scorn and shame—the fullest of humiliation—the most palpable and memorable—that which could be the least overlooked, or pardoned, or forgotten by mankind—of all the wrongs that one human being could inflict upon another. It was irreparable. He who bestowed it could not undo it. Time—distance—virtue—could not wash it out. It was a stain eternal. All great Neptune’s ocean could not clean its blackened traces—there was but one thing—

He started to his feet.

It was *blood*. It was that great, mysterious, sacred specific, the touch of which blasts ordinary hands—the very half-forgotten stain of which betrays ancientest crime—drags the murderer to light—raises the very dead out of their fleshless graves, till vengeance has

had her banquet. The spot upon his forehead could only be effaced—the flame in his heart could only be quenched—by *blood!*

And he sat down and rested his elbows on a table, and leaned his throbbing temples on his fists.

“Oh God!” he suddenly exclaimed, dropping on his knee; “teach me—guide me—save me—my heart is wild—my hand is lifted—give me some sign!”

He strove to pray—as was his custom on occasions where his own sense of right wavered. But his heaving imagination could form no address to the Supreme Being. That serene power that sits above the clouds seemed itself to have deserted him in his deep degradation. He could not utter a prayer, or conceive one. Strange things flitted before his eyes, and flapped their wings in his face; and laughter, and shrieks, and hisses rose once more around him, till the dark room seemed crowded with evil spirits, in the full ecstasy of their orgies over a lost one. He leaned again his forehead upon the table, when suddenly a voice, as if of one of these fiends, seemed to say,

“Yes, you *are* a coward! It is craven *fear* that holds your hand. You are a canting, trembling hypocrite. You deceive yourself with names of virtue and illusions of religion—abject—disgraced—wretched creature! No one else is deceived. Elkington is a gallant fellow. You injured him like a scoundrel, and then fled from him like a coward. You are afraid to fight a duel. An unmanly sensibility and womanish effeminacy is the secret of your convenient principles—your puny virtue. Who made you a judge—a reformer—a prophet? Who gave *you* light to see, what none of the wise—the brave—the great can see? Who teaches *you* to distinguish between what is right and what is not—between what God commands and what he forbids? Why *not* fight a duel? It is the custom! It is a good custom. It is brave and manly. It unmasks cowards and sneaking hypocrites. Fool! look into your own heart, and see what its honest dic-

When they reached that remote room, they found it deserted.

“What is your pleasure, sir?” said Carolan, haughtily.

“To ask you what I have done to merit a condemnation without a hearing. I perceive, with indignation and surprise, that my reputation has been destroyed by calumny. I could drag the slanderer to light, and make him pay with his life the penalty of his falsehood; but that would punish the falsehood, and not disprove it. Neither is Lord Elkington one who would hear with candour what I have to say. To you, sir, I appeal, from a sense of duty, as having been my first friend in Berlin; and I beg to know of what I am accused and what suspected; and I offer, publicly or privately, to submit my life, actions, and character to any scrutiny you may desire. I do not ask your friendship; but I desire you will, by your words and conduct, refute intimations against my character, which I offer you the means of knowing to be above reproach.”

“I had hoped Mr. Wyndham had discovered a more manly mode of righting his injured fame. *Gentlemen* settle these things in a shorter, and, you will excuse me for adding, in a more honourable way,” said Carolan.

“Pray spare me your insinuations, sir,” said Claude, mildly. “I am not here to quarrel, but to explain to you your injustice towards me. If this injustice is wilful, I shall not resent it; but if it is an error, I am willing to explain the calumnies of Elkington.”

“Stop, sir! stop, sir! I shall hear nothing against my friend. I deem it proper to admit him into my family; and I presume I am the best judge of my own companions and my own affairs.”

“Indeed,” said Claude, remembering that he was addressing the father of Ida, and thus, in some degree, repressing the disgust which the pompous, arrogant manner and unreasonable remarks of his companion excited; “indeed, sir, in offering my defence of my-

self, I am obliged to place in your hands once more a letter concerning Elkington, which—”

“Stop, sir—stop! I will hear nothing upon that subject. I presume, sir, you are aware that my daughter has chosen him as her husband; and, though you have been unprincipled enough—”

“Count Carolan!”

“To attempt to win her affections, and to allure her from her father’s house—”

“I? I do most solemnly protest—”

“Stop, sir! I am acquainted with the whole; and I deem it proper, since you have sought this interview, to state, sir, that, when I took you up—a friendless, nameless person—too hastily, as it seems—I thought I discovered in you something worth my encouragement. You are nothing, sir! It was by my stamping you that you have alone been received into society; and, having been mistaken in you, I must—from a high and imperative sense of duty—I must drop you in the most marked manner; any application from you, sir, will be entirely useless.”

There was an insufferable conceit in the manner in which this was said, which made Claude’s blood boil in his veins. It was a thousand times more difficult to endure patiently than the straightforward injuries of Elkington, or the capricious near-sightedness of Lady Beverly. He could not help wishing in his heart that he could call out to the field, and plant, at twelve paces from the muzzle of a good pistol, an insolence and pomposity so inexpressibly provoking. But the father of Ida would have been safe from an angry reply, even had he been influenced by no loftier consideration in governing his passions. He therefore replied,

“If Count Carolan supposes my present suit as an application for his aid in enjoying the pleasures of the Berlin society, he mistakes me greatly. I complain that, by a sudden withdrawal of the respect which, from whatever motive, you have been pleased to honour me with, people are left to form erroneous opinions

respecting me. I offer you proof that such opinions are false; and I appeal to your generosity and sense of honour not to inflict upon me the injury which you have now the power to do, at least without satisfying yourself that you have cause."

"I presume, sir, that I know how to take care of my own honour without your advice; and as to generosity, that which I have already shown towards you has been so ill returned, that I must reserve it hereafter for a more worthy object, and one free from the charges currently believed against you, sir."

"Will you tell me what *are* the charges reported against me?"

"Ask nothing of me, sir. I presume I shall be ready to render an account of my actions to those who have a right to call on me."

"If, then, sir," said Claude, his patience giving way before the insufferable pomposity and insolence which appeared in every word and gesture of his former patron, "your opinion is formed without cause, and adhered to against proof, I can only conclude that, in seeking to change it, I have placed upon it more than its real value."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said Carolan, turning very pale.

"I protest," said Claude, after a moment's reflection, "I am wrong to forget that you have rendered me kindness which should ever seal my lips. I cannot but think, in refusing me the opportunity to lay my character before you, you do me wrong; but I did not mean to fail in my respect towards you; and," for the image of Ida floated through his mind, "Count Carolan, before we part, I beg your pardon."

"No, sir. You intend to insult me."

"I assure you—"

"No, sir—stop! You cannot deceive me. I see it is your intention to insult me. I am justly served, sir, for my imprudence in taking up persons without examining who and what they are! I shall hereafter,

sir, be more on my guard. And I shall deem it a high duty to look with suspicion upon all strangers ere I give them my countenance in society."

Tired of contending against these characteristic remarks—disgusted beyond measure, even more with the manner than the matter—and unwilling, from various considerations, to resent, Claude remained silent, inwardly hoping that a fool might thus be best dealt with; but even silence was no refuge against the displeasure of Count Carolan.

"Go, sir!" said that gentleman. "I recommend you to abandon a class of society for which you are fitted neither by your education nor your fortune; but, before you go, you will be so good, sir, as not to forget that a bill for £50 has been cashed by my banker at your request."

Astonished at this extraordinary speech, Claude, with an indignant heart, and the strongest possible desire to horsewhip him, turned in silence, and, with a burning spot in his cheek, withdrew, with the determination to retire instantly to his house, and leave Carolan, wife and daughter, without another word. He had done all that good sense demanded to re-establish his character; and all, through the malice of Elkington, and the stupid pomposity and conceit of Carolan, had been in vain.

Accordingly, he turned his back upon Carolan, who had never appeared to him so ridiculous and disgusting, and approached the door which led to that of egress. He had reached the last antechamber, lost in thoughts of no tender nature, when he was astonished, not to say startled, to behold Elkington planted directly in the doorway through which alone he could pass to the street; and, on the appearance of Claude, a low laugh announced a fiendish delight, which announced no good. Claude stopped and gazed a moment with surprise upon the features, attitude, and dress of his enemy. He was not in the ordinary habiliments of a ballroom, but wore a surtout and boots.

His cravat was loosely tied—his wristbands unfastened—his vest but partly buttoned, and his hair dishevelled. His attitude was motionless as that of a snake before he springs. On a nearer glance at his features, he perceived that his face was much flushed, and his lips stained with wine. There was a certain air of swagger very different from his usual elegant quietness of manners; and his eyes were fixed on Claude with a fury which probably neither wine nor passion could have produced separately, but which was the combined effect of both. Behind him stood little General Le Beau. The peculiarities in the dress and manner of Elkington, however singular, were less so than his appearance at all, at this time, in such a scene; the news of his father's illness having but so recently arrived, and some of the journals having even formally announced his death.

Claude saw that a premeditated attack awaited him if he advanced, and, had it been possible, despite the sneers which such a course might have excited, he would have returned to the drawing-rooms rather than engage in a scuffle which, from the desperate character of his foe, might be a fatal one; but he saw that it was the intention of Elkington to pursue him if he retreated, as certainly as to assault him should he proceed. He therefore paused, not knowing for a moment what to do.

"So, sir," said Elkington, "I have sought you at your hotel—I have sought you through the streets—I have sought you here—and here you are! I learn you are about to quit Berlin. You have deeply wounded my honour—you have slandered and insulted me. I have demanded of you the satisfaction of a gentleman, which you have refused. Sir, take this—and may it burn on your forehead for ever!"

He stepped deliberately forward, and with his clinched fist struck him a violent blow in the face. For a moment Claude was stunned. He did not think of returning it. He started back and covered his face

with his hands. He seemed blasted with thunder. He heard several voices exclaim, "Ha! a blow!" in tones of surprise and horror. His heart stood still. His reason left him. His principle against taking human life flashed upon him as a mockery. He stirred. It was to sacrifice, and tear to pieces the being who had brought this spell upon him. He found some one had grasped his arms and held him back. Fire fell from his eyes. He thought their glance alone could kill, and he turned them, that they might do so on his victim. He beheld him standing there—very pale, but smiling; a sneer—as a devil—on his face; and his extended finger pointing at him. A sense of agony—of ruin—of utter, interminable, irretrievable shame and despair filled all his being. Never had he known the fearful energies of his nature. Never before had he dreamed what it was to receive a *blow*! Some moments elapsed, he knew not how long. He was deprived of the power of motion. Invisible hands held him. He could not tell how—nor who—nor how long—nor by what tremendous power, his strong impulse to leap forward was withheld. He wanted motion—a weapon—a pistol—anything which would destroy—crush—strike *dead*.

He was first somewhat recalled to reason by the low laugh of Elkington, who advanced and said,

"My card, sir! You know where I am. I shall be happy to hear from you at your earliest leisure."

"To-night—to-night," said Claude.

"When you please, sir."

"Lord Elkington, you are an infamous scoundrel," cried a voice from the side of Claude. It sounded like Denham's, but he scarcely attended to it. He was still as one in a dream.

"How! *who* is that?" demanded Elkington.

"It is I, insolent ruffian!" said Denham, stepping up. "You know my friend is no duellist, and the blow you have struck, may it recoil upon your own forehead and sink into your own heart. How dare

you, sir—your hands stained with dishonesty—your name—”

Elkington now, in his turn, showed signs of trepidation; but he said,

“I did not expect to see *you* here; but I have an account to settle with you also, unless you are as whining a coward as your friend.”

“I will meet you when your hands are clean from—”

“If you are a *man*,” muttered Elkington, desperate with fury, “you will meet me *at once!*”

He lifted his hand and hurled a blow upon the forehead of Denham. The object of this unexpected attack sprung upon him, but Le Beau rushed between.

“Elkington,” said Denham, his face livid with passion, “you have succeeded. You shall hear from me,” and left the room.

This scene was very rapid in its occurrence. A general interference now took place. Elkington retired. Claude was released. The crowd had rushed from the inner apartments at the noise of the brawl; Claude was surrounded by them. They opened to give him room as he passed out. He found himself in the open air; alone, burning like an evil spirit just out of its abode of fire.

CHAPTER III.

A BLOW. This was the blasting thought which filled Claude's mind as he bent his steps he scarce knew whither. He was in a state of agitation which he had never experienced before. He had no longer any power over his reason. His thoughts were tossed to and fro by a whirlwind. He felt, for the moment, that he would commit any crime, could he but tear the heart out of Elkington's bosom! He did not recog-

nise himself. He appeared in his own eyes a *demon*, so dreadfully does unrestrained passion metamorphose even the most rational. All his calm grandeur—his sense of right—his reasoning powers—his resolutions of duty—his dependance on God—they were all gone. There was the same difference between his mind then, and as it usually was in its peaceful moments, as between the tall and gently advancing ship, with sails set, each rope in its place, obedient to the helm, and rising and falling on the summer waves; and the same vessel in a fearful tempest, its sails rent to pieces, its masts down, its rudder broken, and its deck swept by huge waves which threaten instant destruction. He could only think one thought—he could only breathe one word—*A blow!*

He thought to seek Elkington and sacrifice him on the spot.

He resolved to destroy himself instantly.

He found himself at length at home. He went to his room, he flung himself on his bed, but it heaved beneath him, and fire flashed from his eyes and temples, and faces of a laughing crowd jeered and grinned around, and the finger of the scornful Elkington pointed at him, and people shouted in his ear in all sorts of tones, "A blow! a blow!" The voice of hate muttered it; it was shrieked as if by despair; friendship seemed to utter it with an inflection of inquiry and incredulity; it came to him with the laugh of childhood and from the scornful lips of women—"*A blow! a blow!*"

"It is a dream!" he murmured, and he arose from his bed. The heat in his body was intolerable. The very air he breathed seemed hot and burning. He threw off his coat, his vest; he unloosed his cravat and shirt-collar, and sat down by the open window. But he could not sit still—he could not lie—he could not walk. The narrow room oppressed him by its limits; and he strided to and fro, turning against the walls as a wearied and enraged lion paces the small floor of

When we do *wrong*, we cannot know what evil may follow; and when we do right, we little imagine the pleasure and blessing which it often proves afterward.

It was with a cold heart that Claude left the side of his amiable hosts to stroll around the rooms. The same near-sightedness which had amused him so much when applied to poor Digby, he felt was by no means so entertaining when he experienced it himself. Many an eye was suddenly averted as it met his. Many a step turned away from his path. Some pretended not to see him; some coolly perceived his face without seeming to know him; a few seemed embarrassed by his presence, and as unwilling to hurt his feelings by an open slight, as to seem to sanction his equivocal standing and character by any greeting. One or two young ladies, who thought a man who could shrink from fighting a duel must be a perfect monster of vulgarity and cowardice, tossed their heads with unconcealed contempt as he passed near them; and one youthful male aspirant after the honours of the *beau monde*, finding that he might be impertinent without danger, took occasion to half recognise him, and then draw back and retire in a marked manner on his discovery of some sign of a salutation, boasting afterward that he had "*cut him dead*." We are sorry to record that Mr. Thomson was among the shyest of those who thought it necessary to forget him entirely.

For some time Claude wandered around the rooms, every one appearing to avoid addressing him. The effect of this upon him was visible in an increased paleness. Where was Lavalley? where was General St. Hillaire? Some accident had detained them. He felt that he would have given worlds to see the face of one friend—to have any one to talk to, that he might break the general coldness and silence which he appeared to bring with him wherever he went. He wandered on like a man in a dreadful dream. He could scarcely believe that, by the acts and villany of a single person, he had been so entirely ruined in the

estimation of so many people. His isolation was more complete from the fact that, perceiving how much he was the object of odium, he did not like to subject to the attainment of associating with him the few who, perhaps, had he addressed them as usual, would have replied with civility. Thus marked, as it were, by the proscription of the whole brilliant assembly, and by his pale countenance and haughty air a conspicuous person amid the laughing and pleasure-seeking crowds, he thought himself suffering the worst effects of his honest adherence to principle and the slander of his enemies, when Carolan and his family entered the room. Amid the many persons whom they saluted, the omission of him was conspicuous and generally remarked. The count looked at him a moment with disdain, and turned his back. The countess carefully avoided meeting his glance; and even Ida—upon whose beautiful countenance, now as pale as his own, he could not avoid fixing his eyes, in which all his pride and haughty indignation had not been able to prevent a moisture—even Ida turned silently away, and was led by a gentleman to a distant part of the room, without a word or a look.

There are moments when the more we suffer the better able we are to endure, and this, for Claude, was one of them. He felt that to remain longer in a society, after so open an exposure of the estimation in which he was held, would be neither necessary nor delicate. He resolved; therefore, to retire; but, before doing so, to seek with Count Carolan a few moments' conversation. He therefore approached that gentleman, and with an air so calm and yet so evidently agitated that Carolan started at his sudden address.

"Count Carolan, a word with you."

"Certainly," said the count.

"There is, I believe, no one in Madame de N——'s boudoir; may I beg your company there for a few moments?"

The count turned rather pompously and followed.

tates tell you of a *blow*. Every fibre of your trembling frame quivered with it. Every faculty of your shrinking soul fainted at it. Nature rose against it. A blow! Since time began it is the badge of insult—the mark of shame. It is a curse full of the accumulated infamy of ages. The very beast turns at it. Its bodily pain is but a type and faint shadow of its moral ruin. Bear this one, and you will receive another—and another—and another. Who hereafter will honour you? who will love you? Outcast! the blood in your veins is water—your heart is faint—you are not a *man*—you have borne a *blow*!”

CHAPTER IV.

“But I have *not* borne it,” said Claude.

He rose and reached from his bookcase a pair of travelling pistols, and, placing them in his bosom, rushed from his house into the street. At first he knew not whether it was dark or light, whether the weather was fair or cloudy, nor had he any precise idea of what he intended to do, or where he meant to go. He had not walked far when he saw a man. He was a sentinel. For the first time in his life he felt unable to bear the eyes of a fellow-being. The swollen wound upon his face seemed a mountain, and he forgot everything but the desire to withdraw himself into solitude—darkness—and silence—away from the gaze of all—even were it in the grave. Then there came to him again, as he walked, startling thoughts of self-destruction. Only death could relieve him from the agony of his heart. He cast his eyes about him upon the surrounding objects—the long, quiet streets—the deserted squares—the silent houses—the soft, waving trees. He wondered to behold such tranquillity—such peace

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—after all his anguish. He walked beneath the soft branches with shame—he shrank from the moonlight reflected against the houses—the very pavement he seemed to tread on as an intruder—as a felon; and he looked around him like guilt, stolen in the night from its lurking-place—ashamed—and fearful of being seen.

“Ah,” thought Claude, as a moment of calm reflection came to him with the soft air and balmy night-breeze, “little dreams he who, rude in nature, bad in heart, and feeble in understanding—without principle, feeling, or religion—with no restraints in this world, and no communings with the other—ah, little thinks the common, vulgar mind of the dread act he perpetrates when he launches *a blow* against a fellow-being.”

He bent his steps towards his favourite Park. His thoughts now rolled through his mind less confusedly. He was no longer mad, but they had a deep and solemn motion. He passed through the tall Brandenburg gate. The guard at his post looked at him; he shrank from his eye, and the man seemed inclined to stop him, but did not.

“He sees,” said Claude, “humiliation in my very walk.”

There is something in a night-ramble which restores the agitated soul to itself. He felt the rapid motion—the cool, sweet air abate, sooth, and calm the heat which till now had oppressed him. He penetrated into the beautiful recesses of the luxuriant wood. It was again a bright moonlight, and the scene touched him through all his agitation and awoke other feelings.

“Receive me!” he said, “pure shades; receive the outcast, now doubly outcast. Receive the stained, the shamed, the fallen! Shrink not from me, ye flowers, nor turn away your protecting arms, ye calm old trees, who stand for ages through sun and storm, and never know what he who steals beneath your path knows to-night. When last I walked here I was as pure and scatheless as yourselves; now I am apart from other

men, unless I dip my hands in blood! Oh, that it were for ever night! Oh, could I remain for ever here, alone with you—where no blood flows at my feet, and no hisses sound in my ears. A blow! a blow! Poor, poor Rossi! *He* went mad; and it was this same hand that struck him too. God! when he told me of it, I little knew what *a blow* was. Why did not the lightning arrest that rash hand ere it cast on me this fatal misery. I should have *killed* him, but I was held—for good or for evil. Killed! what if I *had* killed him? What is killing? what is life? what is death? Will not God pardon it? Can I be punished for not bearing a burden beyond my strength? and, after all, who says killing is *not* right? The Holy Scriptures call out ‘blood for blood;’ and is not a blow blood? Is it not worse? We have killed each other since Abel’s time—daily and hourly. It is our nature. It enters into the plan of Providence. All things kill. The soft dove snatches the golden insect—the hawk pierces the dove—the lion tears his prey—the boar has his tusk—the serpent his sting. This sweet forest, so fair to view, is but a scene of continual massacre. The microscope, that discovers animalcules invisible to the naked eye, finds them killing each other. I have surely been led away by idle theories of human excellence. I have set myself apart as better than my fellow-beings. I am not. I do not wish to be. God made us mortal. *I will kill this man.* I will meet him—and one of us shall die. Perhaps, now, he will not—then still I will kill him. To-morrow—a week hence—a year—twenty years—standing amid his friends—asleep—awake—in bed—in the fields—in the dance—at the very altar, on his knees in repentant prayer—I will kill him—I will have his heart’s blood!”

He paused. The last words had been spoken aloud. They sounded like the imprecations of a demon escaped from hell, amid these soft glades and perfumed bowers.

“Alas! what am I become? What bloody and

dark demon has entered my body? Is this indeed honour? Is this duty? Our Redeemer suffered a blow!
 * * * * But that sublime tradition which paints the wandering Jew—there is meaning in it. * * *
 * * * * Oh God!" he continued, after pacing on yet farther, "I am lost. I acknowledge myself weak. I know not what I say or do. I am rushing blindly upon murder—upon death. The very fiends in the shape of human reason seem goading and urging me on. Alas! human reason is vain. I have listened to it too long. As yet my hands are pure from blood—as yet I do not stand before the throne of Heaven, uncalled but by my own passion. There is a higher power—I appeal to *Him*. I will not decide in my rashness. What do I care for man's opinion?"

He lifted his hands and eyes to Heaven. It was near morning, and the sky was singularly transparent. He gazed breathless upon its quiet, eternal fields—the serene order of its glittering worlds—the hushed groups of stars—the moon pure, high, bright, and calm as the virtue which he had forgotten—as the innocence he had nearly thrown away. A dark cloud, of which the summit was piled up, mass above mass, like the silver Pyrenean cliffs above the blue Mediterranean, and whose base, black and definitely marked against the radiant air, lay stretched like a huge rock in a summer deep, gave to that upper world of light a new and awful aspect. As he gazed a sudden breeze came softly rushing over the tree-tops—kissing the murmuring leaves—reaching the face of the half-maddened being below—cooling his brow, and cheek, and heart—lifting the hair from his hot forehead—and wafting to his senses and to his soul, in a cloud of perfume, a consciousness of love—of hope—of life—of peace—of Heaven. At the same moment large tears rose to his burning eyelids and rolled down his cheeks; and, throwing himself upon the ground—alone, in that silent wood—unseen but by watchful stars—the proudest spirit that ever walked the globe bent to earthly anguish, and he wept, convulsively, like a child.

Oh, Elkington! Could a wretch like thee bend that brow to the grassy ground, and shake with almost fatal pangs a heart which was to thee as the floating eagle to the howling cur? Thou hast triumphed—but beware! The triumph of guilt is a wrong against Heaven. The good man is the child of God, and God is omnipresent, and he is around us—in the very air—when we know it not.

There is a blessing in tears. They are waters from Heaven, and they cleanse the soul to its pristine peace and purity.

“It is not right,” muttered Claude, “to take human life for human passion. Shall I not leave the task of punishing to the sublime Being who rules the universe? Is he absent? is he powerless?”

A peal of thunder burst over the starting earth ere the last word had left his lip; at the same moment the lightning darted with a blinding intensity. The tremendous volume of sound paused after the first shock—rolled on—paused—went on and on again—crushingly—as if annihilation itself had come upon mankind; and repeating several times its appalling reverberations—broad as the air, and apparently stirring the earth from its very orbit—lost itself threateningly, but calmly, as if amid the vastness of other spheres. Claude had not yet moved when a torrent came rushing down, and he was drenched to the skin; when he raised his head, the sky was wrapped in utter darkness. The wind swept over the wood, bending the tallest trees, and twisting their gnarled limbs till they groaned as if with fear and pain. The peal was followed by another, and so close and heavy that the instinct of self-preservation occupied his mind, to the exclusion of the subject which had so deeply agitated him. He hastened out of the Park into the broad road, where he was less in danger than among the trees. There is something in a good drenching which deadens human passions, and shows how weak and idle are even some of those words which make us commit deeds irrepa-

able. The floods which drenched him were delicious, and cooled his fever. He breathed more freely, he trod more firmly; and, if the truth must be added, at a considerably swifter pace than he generally adopted. His course was bent also towards the gate, and he re-entered the town.

The rain, almost as suddenly as it had commenced, ceased, and a fissure appeared across the masses of black clouds which obscured the heavens. The dispersion of the vapours was so extremely rapid, that, even thrilled as he was by the incident which had just occurred, it fastened his attention. Forming themselves into separate piles, the clouds broke apart in all quarters, leaving the blue void stainless, and the stars glittering with unwonted brightness. Then the whole air, earth, and heaven were suddenly illuminated by a soft radiance. A massive breadth of vapour had passed from before the moon, and she broke out full orb'd and almost light as day, while each torn fragment of silver cloud disappeared entirely, and the air became as still as the heaven.

"Oh God," said he, "I worship thee in thy temple, I call upon thee for aid. May this be to me an emblem of my own soul. Its passions, however tremendous, belong to earth; its calm hopes to Heaven. I commit myself to thee."

And his soul now poured itself in prayer, which seemed to rise unimpeded to the Throne of Mercy. He had implored a sign, and Heaven had granted it. The serenity of nature taught him by its example to sit serene after the mildest storm, which the same hand that conjured up could waft away, and that no tempest could reach the fair arrangement of right and truth. Slowly he wandered to his home. No weakness disturbed his spirit or his intellect. He had made up his determination to pass the indignity he had received in silence. The mortal body was subdued and ever mastered by the superior mind. At the word of reflection and of religion the hot blood flowed cool and

placid through his frame. His obedient pulse played temperately, and all his soul was peace.

CHAPTER IV.

As he entered his hotel, the morning had not begun to break, although it was near the hour. To his astonishment he found the front door ajar, and two horses saddled, and held by Beaufort, who was easily distinguished by the lamplight. On entering, the door of Denham's room was also open. He thought it strange, and stopped a moment. A light step sounded within. He listened. It was a man's. Was Denham up? was he ill? Perhaps his wife—or the lovely little girl? If he should knock! he might disturb them. He approached. Denham was standing within, with his back to him, in a riding-coat, boots, and spurs, completely dressed. He shook violently, bending his head to his outspread hands. Then he stepped forward breathlessly, noiselessly, towards his bedroom door. As he did so, Claude caught a full view of his countenance in a mirror. It was as white as ever lay bound with linen in a coffin. His gaze was fixed on an object in the adjoining apartment.

Extremely shocked, Claude advanced and followed with his eyes those of his friend. He started, however, at what there met his view, and was about retiring, for he found himself gazing upon the face of Mrs. Denham, tranquilly sleeping. A kind of bewilderment held him chained to the spot. The lovely sleeper was apparently lost in a pleasant dream. She was very beautiful. Her long hair lay in a kind of charming negligence around her face—her hand had fallen over her head—her cheeks were rosy—her lips touched with a smile. A happiness—a beauty—a pla-

cid peace gave to her countenance the loveliness of a seraph. Denham approached her—leaned over her. Again he shook violently. He bent his lips near hers, but did not touch them, and then turned away. He appeared to feel no surprise on seeing Claude. He seized his arm, and they hurried into the hall.

“How late is it?” said Denham.

“Daybreak.”

“Already?”

“Certainly. Great God! my friend, what is the meaning of this?”

Denham turned as if startled by the sound of his voice, and now recognised him.

“What, Wyndham!”

“Yes. What is the matter? Why is Beaufort at the door? The horses—your dress—where are you going?”

“You don’t know?”

“No!”

“Adieu, my friend.” He turned very pale, and silently pointing with his inverted thumb to his room,

“Claude, I commit *her* to *your care*. God help you—good-by!”

“But, where? who? what?” stammered Claude.

For so completely had he been stunned by the last night’s scenes, that no trace of Denham’s interference and its consequences had struck his attention. As his friend broke away, and he heard the sound of horses’ feet driven at a rapid gallop over the pavement, a dim, dreamy idea of Denham—and hot words—and he knew not what, came over him. It seemed the recollection of a dream. Denham, then, had been implicated in his quarrel, and was gone to fight a duel. To fight *for him*, perhaps. The thought affected him more terribly than all his own pangs. He rushed to the door. He went into the street. Nothing was to be seen. The pale morning light was broadening over the heaven. One or two street-passengers were already out—labourers going to their toil—milk-women

with their little dog-carts. He went out and looked in the direction in which he had heard the horses' feet. Nothing was to be seen of the fugitives. He returned to the hotel. The waiters were stirring. He spoke to a boy, and asked if he had seen any one pass. No, he had seen nothing. He suspected nothing. And Claude suddenly thought of the police, and instantly set off with the determination to call in their aid. As he went into the street again, a young boy came along, singing aloud. His face was round and rosy, his gait careless and thoughtless, his eyes bright, clear, and happy-looking. Ah, boyhood! how its recollections and an appreciation of its sweet exemption touched his soul. He went on. Every common thing looked strange to him, for death was in his thoughts. A maid was washing windows and humming an air; a man drove his cart by with a crack of the whip; in the building next the police, an old blind man had commenced his rounds, and was playing a merry tune on his organ; a bill—"Furnished rooms to let"—hung over the door. He hastened on. The large doorway was closed. The great gates and little door were equally closed and fastened. He rang—no one came. He rang again and again. At last the door sprang open. He went in. The large, dirty hall was empty. All the doors around were closed. That one where he had entered to lay his complaint against *Le Beau* was also shut. He rang and knocked—no one came. Did they know his deep impatience? Did they know death and life depended on their steps? He waited there half an hour. At length a rough-looking bumpkin came in out of the court, scratching his uncombed head, and gaping at him.

"Where are they—where are the police?"

"Nein! nein!" said the man, shaking his head.

"Can I see no one here?"

"Nein! nein!"

"It's shut?"

"Ja!"

"How can I see them? Where?"

"Eight o'clock!"

"Not before? Can't you tell me where to find them?"

"Nein! nein!" said the man; and, taking out a flint and steel, he drew from his pocket his pipe, lighted it, and went leisurely out of the front door.

Every attempt made by Claude to see the police was vain, and he was about returning to the hotel, when he suddenly thought of Elkington. What if he went to his hotel! He determined to do so, notwithstanding the reluctance, the repugnance he felt to show himself there or anywhere among his fellow-men; farther, he remembered again that he bore the evidence on his brow of the insult inflicted upon him the preceding evening. He went, and gave the servant his card for Lady Beverly.

"She is asleep," said Scarlet, bluntly.

He begged she might be awakened.

"Impossible," said Scarlet.

"It affects the life of her son!"

"Perhaps so," said the man.

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" said Claude.

"Come, come," said Scarlet, "a civil tongue, if you please; you've got a whole eye yet, and you'd better keep it if you know when you're well off."

"I will go myself," said Claude, "to Lady Beverly's door. She cannot know what's going on."

He stepped forward. The man laid a brawny hand upon his arm, and coolly clinched the other fist.

"I tell you what, my rum chap," said Scarlet, "if it wasn't for mere shame's sake, I'd bung up that t'other eye of your'n in less than no time. I'd sarve ye as master did—good for nothing, cowardly poltroon you are—to let another man go out and get shot, all for avenging of your cuffs. If I couldn't be a better gentleman than that, I wouldn't be none, no how."

Claude grasped the fellow by the throat and dragged him a few steps with a force which greatly aston-

ished him, who thought he had only a chicken to deal with; and his astonishment was not diminished when, just as he thought he was to receive a "drubbing," Claude released his hold, and said,

"Poor fellow! while your master goes unpunished, you ought to have free room. Let me see Lady Beverly, and here is my purse."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Scarlet, very respectfully; "but milady can't be seen. Indeed, she's not here—she's out of town."

"Out of town?"

"Last night! gone! and not to come back! We're to follow in a day or two."

"I understand," said Claude, with a sickening heart. "Your master is also out?"

"Yes, sir," said Scarlet, in a low tone.

"And you are his confidential servant?"

Scarlet was silent.

"I will give you £10 if you will direct me to where he is before anything happens."

"I might take your money, sir," said Scarlet, "but it wouldn't be of no use. It's too late. It's all over by this time."

"Great Heaven!"

"It is, sir, that's certain. They be gone out now two good hours."

"And when did the arrangements take place?"

"Last night. Master up and struck Mr. Denham—I believe the poor gentleman's name's Denham—ain't it, sir? and he's game too—true blood—no backing out *there*—up to the mark! It wasn't fifteen minutes, sir, afore he had a gentleman here, and in a half an hour the hull was settled. I hearn it all myself. I was ordered to stand and keep watch afore the door."

"And where is it they have gone?"

"Oh, don't fret yourself, sir. It's impossible to help it. The poor gentleman's good stuff; but, Lord, sir! he might as well put his head into a forty-nine pounder when it's a gitten fired, as to go out with master."

He never went out with a man yet without pinking him. The poor gentleman's tucked under the green sod an hour ago. I hope he haint got no family, has he, sir? These ere is awkward things in such cases; but when a man's called a 'd—d rascal,' what ken he do, you know? How's your eye this mornin, sir?"

CHAPTER V.

CLAUDE went back to his hotel in a state of mind bordering on distraction, but it had the effect to divert him from the consideration of himself. It seemed that a fatal duel on his account, in return for an insult which he had declined to resent, was all that was necessary to sink him to the lowest depths in the world's esteem, if not in his own. But that was a less insupportable reflection than the situation of Mrs. Denham and the sweet little girl, who were, probably, yet locked in peaceful slumber, unconscious of the thunderbolt about to fall upon them. He would have gone again to the police, but he had no precise information to give, and he felt sure, too, that it was too late for interference. There was, however, still a *hope*. It was possible either that chance might interrupt the meeting—or that Elkington might fall—or that, if Denham should receive a wound, it might not be mortal. But then the utter recklessness of Denham—his knowledge of Elkington's affair with the cards—and the unerring skill, as well as remorseless character of the latter, recurred to him with an agonizing force. As he entered the hotel he saw that there was an unusual confusion. Several waiters were running to and fro. One of them came up to him quickly as soon as he saw him.

"You had better go to Madam Denham."

"Has anything happened?"

"Mr. Denham has gone off."

"And not yet returned?"

"No."

He breathed again. He had felt an unutterable fear on approaching the house.

"Thank God!" he said, "all may yet be well."

"The lady is in a bad way, sir; she's very ill."

At this moment a voice from a servant at the top of the stairs called out,

"Has Mr. Wyndham come in yet?"

"You'd better go to her, sir," said the landlord. "I fear something very dreadful has—"

Claude recovered from a momentary faintness, served his heart, and entered the room. All that he had imagined of horrible was surpassed by Mrs. Denham. She was pale as death itself. Her hair hung in disorder about her beautiful and lightly clothed person. Her eyes were distended with terror, and the little Ellen clung to her bosom, weeping aloud, and winding her arms around her neck affectionately, and repeating,

"Dear sister, my dear, dear sister. He will come, he will come. He will indeed, indeed he will!"

Mrs. Denham's eyes were perfectly dry and starting from her head. She looked an image of tragedy itself. The moment Claude entered she saw him, for her wild eyes were fixed on the door; she sprang up with an hysterical laugh, and, rushing upon him as a lioness on one who had robbed her of her young, she uttered, in tones that pierced his heart and froze his blood, the dreadful words:

"Ah! and now then! *where's Charles?*"

"He is—he is—"

"Is he here? Is he here?"

"No—not here—not this instant."

"Where is he, then? *What* have you done with him?"

"My dearest madam—"

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"Is he alive? Is he *dead*?"

"No, no—God grant—I hope—not—not dead," muttered Claude, trembling beneath the powerful agitation of this scene.

"Is he safe? Will he come? What do *you* know? Is there any hope?"

"I think—I believe—"

"What do you *know*? Speak—as before your God. If you deceive me!"

Claude turned away, and, pressing his extended hand against his forehead, shook as one by the bed of the beloved and the dying.

She released her hold on him, and her hands fell nerveless by her side.

"Then he is *dead*. Oh God—oh God—I have often feared this." She sank back into a chair.

"Charles—my husband—it is a dream—it is impossible."

Claude approached her, and took her cold hand in his.

"My dear friend, hear me. It is too late to deceive you as to what has occurred. Your husband *has* gone out to comply with a strange custom, but we have no news of him, upon my honour. It is very possible he he may return—alive—unhurt. Believe me, dearest madam, there are many reasons to hope—indeed, indeed there are."

"I'm sure there are," said Ellen, climbing up and again winding her arms around her neck, and covering her lips, forehead, and face with kisses.

"You do not *know* anything, then?"

"Nothing."

"And he *may* return? His step may be heard—his beloved image may once more bless my eyes? Hark—hark"—her face lighted up with intense pleasure—"it is—it is—ha, ha! ha, ha!" She screamed with joy, and darted towards the door, which opened and admitted—a stranger.

The shock was too much for the poor girl. She would have fallen at full length upon the floor had not

Claude caught her on his arm. He lifted her to the sofa, and, consigning her to the care of the maid, turned to the new-comer.

"Who are you, sir—and what is your message?"

"Sir," said the man, "I am a Commissioner of the Hotel. I have been sent to the lodgings of Lord Elkington with directions to let you know when he returned."

"And he *has* returned?" said Claude, in a low tone, and with a shudder of inexpressible horror.

"He has."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

There was a pause. The commissioner then added,

"He will leave town to-night."

"Did you see him?"

"I did, sir."

"What was he doing?"

"He was at breakfast, sir."

"Breakfast?"

"Yes, sir; he said the eggs were boiled thirty seconds too long."

"The eggs?"

"And appeared in excellent spirits?"

"Oh, it is certain," said Claude, "Charles and he have settled it. I was sure—"

The man shook his head.

"What do you know?" said Claude.

"Nothing."

Claude paused.

"I will go—I will see him myself. I cannot endure this." And he instantly set off for Elkington's lodgings.

CHAPTER VI.

"**LORD ELKINGTON is at home?**" said Claude to Scarlet.

"**No, sir,**" said Scarlet, touching his hat; "he has been home, but is now gone out again. I told you he'd come back!"

"**Has anything happened?**"

"**Yes, a good many things has happened,**" said the man; "things is always a happening!"

"**For God's sake, my good fellow, if you know anything!**"

"**Egad, I know a good many things—but there's one thing I don't know. I don't know what right you've got to stand a questioning me in this here style about private affairs. Mum's the word! But master said you might see him if you called, and only you, or some one from you.**"

"**Where is he, then? I will see him!**"

"**Well, he's now at Count Carolan's, with several other people. Count Carolan gives a great 'dejooney dong-song' to-day.**"

Claude instantly bent his steps towards Carolan's.

It was too early for the general company to arrive, but several carriages were before the door. He entered and mounted the stairs. They were arranged with flowers and orange-trees, and the air was full of perfume. The sound of distant music reached his ears.

"**Whom will you see, sir?**" said the servant, for neither Claude's face nor habiliments indicated one of the ordinary guests.

"**Your master, or Lord Elkington.**"

"**They are in the boudoir of Madame la Comtesse.**"

"**Lead on.**"

And the man went forward, opened the door, and announced him. He walked in. There was Count Carolan, General St. Hillaire, Elkington, and the young prince—they were all engaged in earnest conversation. At Claude's name there was a sudden pause, and his entrance was remarked with much attention.

"Oh, sir," said Elkington, "you come. You had better have sent a friend."

"Mr. Wyndham," said Carolan, "you must be brief, for a trifling circumstance has occurred which renders it necessary for Lord Elkington to absent himself a while; and let me take the occasion to observe, in the most marked manner, sir, that, in remaining here when he might easily have gained the frontier—*merely* from a high and imperative sense of honour, and a generous determination not to escape from you—he has shown a character which places him far above your calumnies, and far above reproach. I presume, sir, you have come to demand satisfaction for the injuries inflicted on you last night. It would have been more *comme il faut* to send a third person."

"I come to demand my friend," said Claude.

"Your friend! Have you not selected one?"

"I speak of Mr. Denham. I come to ask of his fate. He has a wife in a state of distraction—in suspense, and to relieve her I have undertaken this disagreeable visit. Is Mr. Denham dead?"

"Mr. Denham is as he is," said Carolan; "and permit me to remark, that if you were more *au fait* to the way of the world, you would not prefer such questions to persons not likely to answer."

"Mr. Wyndham," said Elkington, "if you are not really a more despicable character than even I take you to be, you will not now decline the invitation which I tender you. Is it your intention to give me a meeting?"

"No, sir. I regard you as a murderous ruffian, and beneath contempt."

"You are a dishonoured man!" said Elkington;

"and words from your lips have hereafter no meaning."

"By those who honour *you*, my lord, I hope I shall be always despised. By frequenting your society, they sanction your deeds and degrade themselves to your level. If woman, knowing you, touches your hand, she falls from her purity; and if Providence sleeps not, your own character will prove to you a sufficient shame and a sufficient curse."

"You have received *a blow!*" said Elkington, pointing his finger at him.

"I have," said Claude; "and an insult thus given and thus endured, recoils upon him who inflicts, and ennobles him who receives. My character lies in the tenour of a stainless life, and cannot be permanently injured by a tongue uninspired by truth, or a hand unguided by honour. I appeal to *Him* who knows my motives for protection against you. He knows also that, if you are yet alive, you have to thank my fear, not of you, but of *him*."

There was a calmness in his manner which carried conviction to the very soul of St. Hillaire, and awed even Elkington himself. Carolan only said, "Ah, bah! fine notions—high ideas, sir—but, since you are not come here to redress your honour, the house is mine, and—"

He waved his hand towards the door.

"I forgive you, Carolan," said Claude; "and may the time never come when you shall know, too much to your cost, the difference between an honest man—and such a person as you have made your friend."

"How great! how noble!" said St. Hillaire.

"Let him say his worst. He is a blighted man, and the blow I publicly inflicted on him will never be forgotten. If, however, he dares again—" said Elkington.

"Stop, young man," said St. Hillaire, in a deep voice. "You cannot, you shall not again persecute this person. If he *be* destitute of the courage which leads men into danger, is it proper that you should

therefore thus pursue him? And if he be, as I believe he is, gifted with all your bodily courage and ten times more—and if he be acting as he does, with the forbearance almost of God, solely from a *principle of right*, in what light do *you* then appear? You have raised the hand of a fiend against true grandeur and the sublimest courage which, even at the blow and hiss, does not stoop from its course. What have you then done? You have smitten as the Jew smote the Saviour. I do not approve your course. The blow you have struck will sink into your own forehead and your own soul deeper than into that of this unoffending being. My young friend, I do not envy you. I had rather be in his place than yours. You have no other course than to ask his pardon.”

“His pardon, sir?” said Carolan, in a tone of astonishment.

“I? an apology?” said Elkington. “Never.”

“Go, then. You are rash, young, and ignorant of the true uses and meanings of life. That may be some excuse, but I believe you will suffer more than your victim from the occurrences of last evening. I believe, sir, in your cooler and better moments, they will haunt you as a curse, and that they will leave a stain upon your reputation as a gentleman.”

“By G—d, sir,” said Elkington, “do you mean—”

“I mean that you are in the *wrong*, young man,” said St. Hillaire, sternly; “and that, for one, I disdain you as an associate. I have watched your course in reference to this matter, and I *despise* you, sir.”

“General St. Hillaire,” said Elkington, “do you know to whom—”

“General,” said Carolan, “I protest—”

“Gentlemen, I wish you good-morning,” said St. Hillaire.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HAS he come home? Is he here? Have you seen him? Have you heard anything of him?" were the fearful questions from every lip as Claude returned to his hotel.

"Madam Denham is nearly distracted," said the landlord. "She calls for you. Pray go to her."

"I dare not," said Claude, with a shudder.

"She has demanded to be informed the instant you come in," said the man. "She is in a state of intense excitement and agony. She walks the floor with frantic steps, as pale as a sheet. Sometimes she groans and weeps, sometimes she prays. She's in a terrible way. It's quite dreadful—and the poor little girl, too, is so distressed. My God! what sort of a man must her husband be, to leave her in such a condition?"

A servant here came for Mr. Wyndham. He must go instantly to Madam Denham. It was with a faltering heart that Claude complied with this request, and once more approached the door where so lately he bade adieu to the friend who, perhaps, was now in eternity. As he did so, he heard the hasty steps of the bereaved widow—her deep groans—her bursting sobs. He entered. Her look made him shudder.

"Speak!" cried she. "Charles—"

"I know nothing," said Claude.

"Have you seen Lord Elkington?"

Claude hesitated.

"Is he living?"

"He is."

"Oh, Mr. Wyndham, for the love of God, tell me all. You know, I am sure you do. I can bear it better than this suspense. Tell me—my husband is

wounded—is perhaps—” she clasped her hands with quivering lips and sobbed convulsively—“*dead!*”

“I do not know. I have heard nothing distinctly. He may be alive—”

“Oh, God bless you for that word. He may yet live. But *where is he?* Why does he not return? Perhaps he is wounded. Perhaps he is this instant dying?”

She pressed her hands against her brain.

“Ah, cruel, cruel Charles! Is it you who have abandoned me thus? you, who have torn my heart—inflicted these horrid pangs? I will no longer wait. I will go seek him.”

She rushed to the door.

“My dear, dear sister,” said Ellen, “you cannot go. You do not know where he is. You are not dressed. If he were in the street, he would soon be here. If not, where would you go? Stay with me, my dear, dear sister. God will take care of us;” and the sweet child again folded her in her arms, and pressed her ashy cheek against her little bosom.

“He might come, too, during your absence,” said the maid, respectfully.

“Oh yes! true!” she said, with a frightful smile.

Hours passed away as if they were ages. Noon— evening—night—and still Denham came not—and no news. Claude had again addressed himself to the police. They were abroad in search of the parties, but they could obtain no intelligence as to where they had gone, or what had become of them. Elkington was not at his lodgings—Lady Beverly had left town the day before for Hamburg, as if in anticipation of some difficulty. It was reported, too, that Elkington, early in the morning, had also gone, but whither no one knew. His escape had been connived at by so many gentlemen, who thought they were aiding a gallant fellow out of an unjust danger, that the police could get no trace of him. Indeed, from many considerations, they conducted the pursuit with no great activity. Al-

though duelling was strictly prohibited in Prussia, and particularly by the great Frederic, whose clear mind had seen all its folly and wickedness, the crime was then—as we fear, alas, it is now—considered as one of those genteel misdemeanours of which a large class of educated, and many excellent men, are rather proud than ashamed. The magistrate who sternly sentences a poor, ignorant creature for having stolen wherewithal to support fainting life, cannot condemn the passionate fool who submits his disagreements with his friends to the chances of mortal combat, and who shows so little respect for himself—his adversary—society—and God, as to stake two lives on a throw, and thus sanction one crime by joining it with another. The police also felt that the parties were Englishmen—that securing a survivor in such a case would place them in an awkward dilemma. Lord Elkington's rank and fortune, moreover, threw a sort of exemption over his actions in the public opinion, and it was understood also that the injury had been words offensive to his *honour* as a *gentleman*.

Poor Mrs. Denham. It seemed impossible that she could endure the interminable length of this day; but the very intensity of her apprehensions prevented her from sinking into the insensibility which nature would otherwise have provided for her relief. As the night approached, her agony had reached a state of nervous excitement, which rendered it necessary to call in a physician; but she would take nothing, and permit no remedies to be adopted, till she should receive direct intelligence of Mr. Denham.

Nine o'clock struck—ten—eleven—twelve; still Denham came not, and no news of him could be obtained. It was now near one. The widow—for all felt that she was such except herself, and she still hoped—was almost deprived of her senses. At every whisper she started, at every step in the street she trembled. Sometimes the sound of horses' feet would advance from the distance. Her features would light

up; the noise approached, and seemed about to stop at the door, but went on, and was lost again in the distance; now a shout in the street startled her—now an oath. Sometimes she heard the tramping of the soldiers' feet, as the guard were led round to their posts; and once a party of riotous young men went by, and, by a cruel coincidence, stopped immediately beneath the window, shouting forth a glee, which was interrupted by peals of laughter. Then they departed singing, their voices softening as they retreated, and dying at last utterly away; leaving, they little knew what—silence, solitude, and despair behind them.

“Mr. Wyndham,” said Mrs. Denham, suddenly, in a voice of sternness, which made him think her senses were failing, “*you* are the cause of this!”

“My dearest madam—”

“*You—coward!*”

“Great Heaven!”

“*You* knew my husband had the heart of a lion. You knew *he* couldn't see his friend abused, and you—you meanly took *a blow—a blow!* a base, blasting blow! and yet you *live—coward!* and he, my brave, my noble, my lion-hearted Charles, for your infamy has risked his life—which, God in his mercy be praised, is but a risk. He will not perish. It is impossible. He will come. He is wounded, doubtless, but what do I care for wounds? He will come, or he will send for me. I shall nurse him. He will recover; but *you*, sir, must never look for his friendship again; nor his, nor mine, nor the world's esteem, nor your own. You are a dishonoured man. I had rather be *Elkington* than you. A blow! coward!”

There was suddenly a knock at the door. Mrs. Denham fell back in her chair, laughing hysterically. The intruder was a messenger of the police, to know whether any news had been received of the affair.

One o'clock. The heavy peal went floating and quivering over the silent town, and struck into the hearts of all present, for they now foreboded the worst.

The solemn sound, as it died away, called forth new groans, sobs, and hysterical screams. All conversation ceased. There was as little room for remark as for hope or consolation. They sat like those unhappy beings we sometimes read of on a wreck, waiting in mute despair till the broken hulk goes down with them for ever.

Two o'clock struck. Mrs. Denham had sunk into a state of exhaustion, when a sharp, heavy knock announced an end of this suspense. There was decision in it. The door was opened by a servant, and a step was heard in the hall, quick, light, buoyant. It approached, and all eyes were turned towards the door.

"Ah God! he is here at last," cried Mrs. Denham, with a smile of ineffable happiness, and gasping for breath. The new-comer entered. It was again a stranger. A start of horror went round the room, and a low shudder was heard from Mrs. Denham, who buried her face in her hands.

"Mr. Wyndham?" said the stranger, who was a gentleman in dress and appearance.

Claude stepped forward and recognised Beaufort.

"I beg your pardon," said that gentleman, with a polite smile; "will you permit me to have one word with you?"

He cast a glance around upon the rest of the company, but without in the least changing his manner. He was a man of the world, and well knew what he was going to see when he undertook the mission.

Claude followed him into an adjoining chamber.

"Devilish painful duty, my dear fellow—disagreeable thing—in fact, d—d awkward—but—"

"Speak out, and tell me what has happened," said Claude, sternly; "*I* also have my duties."

"Sir!" said Beaufort, "your tone is very extraordinary, but your excitement excuses any liberty; I promised to let you know that your friend is hurt."

"Hurt! Oh, Beaufort! Oh, Heaven be praised! is he only hurt?"

"Why, his wound is bad—d—d bad. He—he—in short, he's—*dead*, sir."

"Dead!" said Claude, with awe, with horror unutterable. "Denham! my friend!"

"Yes, dead enough, sir. This is possibly rather annoying to you. I'm devilish sorry—I am, positively."

"Dead!" echoed Claude, the sound of his friend's living voice ringing in his ears; his beaming, laughing eyes flashing full before his imagination.

"To say the truth, this morning at P——. He behaved very well—devilish well—I'm quite sure you'll be glad to hear that. The thing was perfectly well managed, I assure you. Perfectly. Nothing could be handsomer or fairer. Elkington missed him the first shot. Devilish odd, too—wasn't it? The second he hit him. He's a terrible dog. The ball went directly through the heart. He leaped six feet in the air, and he was a dead man before he came down. I protest I never saw anything so handsomely done."

"And I am to bear this news to his wife!"

"Certainly! I've done *my* part. I stood by him to the last, and have brought the corpse in town. It will be here in—let me see, half past two—it'll certainly be three. By-the-way, madam is a fine-looking creature. Devilish pretty in that dress. Poor girl! I'm devilish sorry. You'll take good care of her, Wyndham? Egad, you're a lucky dog! Where are you going to have the body put?"

"Did—did my friend leave me no message?"

"Oh, apropos—what a forgetful dog I am! Certainly—a note for *you*."

"Give it me."

"Yes, devilish queer that I should forget that, as the poor man isn't likely to trouble me with another in a hurry. He put it in my hand the very last thing. He behaved immensely well, positively. I really thought at first that he was going to touch Elkington; his ball grazed his sleeve. Elkington smoked a segar through

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the whole affair. He's a capital fellow. Why—I've lost your letter—no—yes I have—no—ah, here it is."

"Who has the body?"

"Two men. We hired 'em to bring it in town in the carriage. Egad! it's been all day in a windmill. We had to disperse, you see. Elkington's gone this morning at 12; I start to-night. I shall run over to Carlsbad. This cursed German *cuisine* plays the devil with one's stomach. Won't you smoke?"

Claude did not answer. He was reading the note he had just received, which struck his nerves and soul with an agony of horror and grief, traced, as it was, by one now in the grave.

"Well—adieu," said Beaufort. "*Leben sie wohl, mein freund! Au revoir!*"

And the young man, lighting his segar and arranging the curls around his forehead, went out.

CHAPTER IX.

TREMBLING—thrilling—half blinded by horror and grief—Claude, after several vain attempts, read the letter. It was written in the writer's usual flowing hand. There was no tremour, or sign of haste, or agitation, except that two drops of wax from a candle showed that it had been the work of the night.

"MY DEAR CLAUDE,

"This will only be put into your hands in case of my death. You will, before then, be informed of the circumstances which produce it. I saw you struck last night, and I lost all prudence; I interfered, and received a blow myself. I have always been brought up to think a *blow ought not* to be borne. Death is preferable to dishonour. I know Elkington is a shot, but I can't help it. The custom of society *must be*

complied with. Do not blame me, my wiser and more thoughtful friend. You have your opinion, I mine. I am determined to kill Elkington if I can, unless he make me the humblest apology. This is not to be expected, and I am prepared to fall. I need not say that I have not called on you to arrange the thing for me, as I know you would have taken measures to prevent it; otherwise there is no man on earth I should so readily have chosen. Beaufort I had a slight acquaintance with, and he consented at once.

“I do not allow myself to think of the future; it would be useless, and might unman me. My uncle’s fortune, you know, most unfortunately, reverts to other heirs at my death; but I have ensured my life for £2000, which will keep—I cannot write her name—out of want. You are in a fixed position in society, calm, wise, and good; and with leisure to make this blow as tolerable as possible. She is an *angel*, Claude. Never has she brought one frown to my face, one shadow to my heart. She is all beauty, compliance, sweetness, love—a being as rare as diamonds are. I do not write to her. I *dare* not. I cannot. I have tried, but there my firmness forsakes me. I love her to adoration, the extent of which even she cannot know. I have kissed the glove she has worn, the flower she has touched. I have often blessed her with all a lover’s rapture—in her absence—in her beautiful sleep; and, were I to suffer my thoughts to dwell longer on her, I should let this Elkington go—I should defy all men’s *opinion*. But a *blow*! Destiny calls me—I have no alternative left.

“You will find in my portfolio, third drawer from the top, in the secretary of the little room I occupied as a reading-room, a paper of directions which I have prepared for you. The life insurance company will pay, I presume, without hesitation. I am quite certain she can never want the firm and wise protection of a brother while *you* live. At this moment, my fancy recurs to what may happen to-morrow; to the

pain it will inflict on her sweet—sweet bosom ; to the scene which must follow any accident. I am almost ready to acknowledge that I am *wrong* in thus pursuing this act ; that you are right—nobly—sublimely right in your higher, milder, and *braver* course. Yes, I do you justice—full—full justice. As my eye glances from this sheet—the last, perhaps, I shall ever write—to the face of *my wife*—who has trusted her happiness to *me*—now sealed with a calm and happy peace, which my infatuation is so soon to destroy—I feel like a scoundrel and a fool. Yet this custom of society *must* be complied with. Protect her, ye angels ! Pity her, oh God !

“ Adieu, my friend—may we meet again !—and, once free from this affair, I here record my oath never to engage in another. Kiss Ellen for me, should the worst happen ; and bear my blessing, my farewell to my wife.

“ Ever affectionately, my dear Claude,

“ Your friend,

“ CHARLES DENHAM.

“ P.S.—And our journey to Italy, too !”

As Claude finished reading, there was a slight stir behind him. He turned—it was Mrs. Denham. Her pale face—her wild eyes—her long loose hair—the singular expression which terror and long agony had called into her countenance, now heightened by the certainty that Denham was no longer living, gave her the aspect of a spectre escaped at the dead hour of night from the abodes of eternal wo : she had read the letter over his shoulder, and she stood pointing at it with the grin of a lunatic.

“ Well, then,” she said, calmly, “ I know all. Charles is *dead*. Charles ! Charles !—my life !—my love !—my husband !—my own beloved Charles !”

She wandered back again to her room. Claude could not conceive, indeed, how she had been thus suffered to escape from it. He had not time to follow her before

he heard the wheels of a carriage rolling away from the door, and he understood at once that the body had arrived, and that the attention of the rest had probably been attracted to that new and appalling scene in the tragedy. Shuddering with a horror which he had never experienced before, as well at the thought of the shock which the approaching scene was about to communicate to himself as to the appalled heart of the widow, he overtook her once more in the room, which was now deserted by everybody. Even Ellen was gone.

"Where are they all?" said she, in a voice perfectly calm and natural. "Have they gone to bed already, without saying good-night? No. *There* they are! Where have they been? *What* is going on?"

These queries were drawn forth by several figures which came in, with their backs towards the apartment. As they turned, their faces were all white and terror-stricken. Two or three men next appeared—waiters and strangers, among whom were some mere chance passengers, apparently attracted by curiosity from the street. A noise was heard in the corridor, as the uneven tread of men with heavy shoes bearing a burden, and a dead silence overspread all. Then the landlord entered and whispered Claude, who took Madam Denham's hand and led her into the adjoining room. She accompanied him passively. Ellen, pale and terrified, followed, but instantly darted back. The tramping grew nearer. The adjoining room seemed full of people.

"Lock the door!" said a voice, in a low but business-like tone. "Shut this one."

There was a pause, interrupted only by the heavy tread of feet.

"Take away the little girl!" said the same voice. "The other table—no—breadthways—now! steady! there! a sheet!"

There was another pause.

Claude held the hand of his companion with firm-

ness, but, disengaging herself with a sudden start, she darted forward and threw open the door. There—in his usual clothes, boots, and spurs—his cravat off—his face stark, stiff, white—his long, glossy hair hanging back from his head—his arm fallen lifeless from the table—his marble forehead and lip touched with blood—lay the dear, the revered, the happy husband—his stately form extended in death. The wife saw it as she threw open the door. There was a quivering, broken shriek, but low and short. She darted forward. She pressed her hand against his brow—his lips—his heart. She touched his closed eyes—his icy cheeks—his stony forehead. Her fingers were chilled and stained with blood.

“My husband!” she cried, with a convulsive sob. Then, without a word, a tear, a murmur more, she fell upon his bosom.

The rude men stood apart.

No one broke the silence.

And thus came back the duellist to those whom Providence had appointed him to protect; to his wife—to his child—to his home; but yesterday full of happiness—of peace—of hope!

CHAPTER X.

THE day broke again, and all the noises of a busy city rose upon the air as usual. The birds were singing in the groves, the shining river lapsed slowly on in the sunshine, the careless passengers flowed in the same ceaseless tide through the streets, intent on their own affairs, of business or pleasure, of folly or vice. How few in the serious resolutions of virtue! Night fell with its coolness and silence—its dewy odours—its glittering stars—its silver clouds—its hidden scenes of mirth—of revel—of rash crime—of dark wo.

During the day, the early dawn of which had brought to Mrs. Denham the dead body of her husband, and while it remained extended in bloody state upon the spot where, so few hours before, his gay voice had sounded, and he had held aloft the sparkling wine in the full security of life, health, and hope, the unhappy widow appeared able to restrain her feelings by their very intensity, as if none of the ordinary modes of grief could adequately give them vent. She even spoke with Claude calmly and rationally on the subject of her affairs; begged him to make several necessary arrangements preparatory to her departure; alluded to the anguish the news would cause her father, and inquired in what way "Charles" was to be buried. Since the first sight of him, when she had fainted on his cold and cruel bosom, she had not ventured to see the body, which had undergone the sad ceremonies preparatory to interment, and been duly clad in the last appalling toilet of the grave. It was considered necessary to commit it to the earth in the most private manner, and as soon as propriety would permit. Poor Claude! who had not slept for two nights—worn out, staggering, and exhausted—attended himself to these painful duties—answered for the expenses—ordered all the necessary articles, each one of which, even to name, strikes heavily on the heart, and calls upon us like a trumpet to remember the fleetingness, the nothingness of life. Mrs. Denham without him would have been alone, and it is frightful to think of the rude shocks her anguish-stricken mind would have been subjected to but for his firm, able, and watchful forethought and attention. She had no arrangements to make—no men to see—no bills to pay—no attempts at fraud to withstand. The door of her room leading to the body was locked, and she was seen by and she saw nobody. Her piety was fervent and sincere; and this solitude, which she employed in imploring support from her Creator, strengthened her soul and calmed her despair.

Night came again—night—upon the widow. The

cool, sweet shadows which *he* had loved so much—the bright, unweeping stars—and the round, soft moon, which he was never to see again. At her request, Mrs. Denham was left alone with the little Ellen, in whom this trying occasion showed a mind beyond her years. These two sweet beings were bound up in each other, and both, like two limpid rivers stealing to the sea, had poured all their affections upon him who had deserted them. The night seemed to open afresh the tenderness of their nature. Ellen stole into the lap of her sister, who folded and pressed her in her arms.

“We are alone in the world now, Ellen.”

“My dear sister,” was all that the affectionate and thoughtful child could utter.

In a few moments Mrs. Denham asked for her portfolio. It was in a little room adjoining the bedroom, looking out on a garden. Denham had been writing there the day before. Ellen went to get it. Instead of returning, she remained, and Mrs. Denham heard a sob, and followed herself. On entering, her eyes were struck by the various objects of the room. There was his chair—the desk he had been writing on—his cane—and a pair of gloves, carelessly flung upon the table by himself, and wearing the impress of his hands. A book lay open, with a pearl paper-knife under it, and his pencil-case. A sheet of paper half filled with his writing. The ink seemed scarcely dry. He had left it at her call the day of Claude’s last visit. It was a letter to her father. She read it. It was full of gay anticipations of their intended visit to Venice. His cloak and his travelling cap hung against the wall; and the bereaved wife heard—so illusive is imagination—the tones of his voice—now in light mirth—now in kind affection—or directing a servant—or reading a passage in poetry; then his laugh—then a tune hummed unconsciously, peacefully.

She fell upon a sofa, and tears, as if her very soul were dissolving in torrents, gushed from her eyes,

and her throbs threatened to suspend the functions of life.

Claude had voluntarily slept in the room with the body. Locking the doors, wrapping his cloak around him, he threw himself upon a sofa at a late hour. Even exhausted as he was with mental and bodily fatigue, the proximity of the cold remains of the man he most loved, and the sobs of the unhappy widow, still, for a time, kept him from the sleep which nature demanded. For a few moments, as he lay—now the only protector and guide of that helpless woman, whose rash, unreflecting husband, had abandoned her to such horrors—he could not but feel that he had acted rightly; that, however gallant and chivalric might appear the course of Denham to the eye of vain pride and worldly reason, he had acted not only unwisely, but cruelly, and even wickedly. By submitting his quarrel to the chances of a meeting, he had made the pistol of a profligate duellist the arbiter of his own honour and his wife's happiness. He had ignominiously thrown away a life upon which rested heavy responsibilities, and thereby gratified Elkington's wish. What was the result of this fierce and desperate arbitration? Had he resented the blow? Had he wiped out its stain? Had he punished the aggressor? No; the aggressor had struck him with the deliberate intention to provoke a combat, in which his skill made the result almost certain. In yielding, he had weakly run into the trap of a designing foe. That foe had triumphed. *He* was laid low in death. His fortune was forfeited; and even the policy of insurance, upon which he had so strangely depended in the hurry and whirl of his last hour, he would have known, at any other time, could, under the present circumstances, be worth nothing; death in a duel being one of those acts which break the contract between the insurer and the insured. Mrs. Denham, then, was left penniless and helpless in a foreign country. Her bursting sobs betrayed her pangs. Where was the ear that should be first to hear, the hand nearest to sooth them?

At length he dropped asleep in the midst of these reflections, and for all the distress he had suffered, he felt that secret support which attends the consciousness of having done right. Deeply agonized as he was at the thought that the very act of virtue which he congratulated himself upon had caused the death of his friend, his firm and unwavering sense of reason taught him that the consequences, however fatal, were the decree of Heaven. Amid the grief they occasioned him, there was no feeling of self-reproach.

His sleep, though unbroken, was filled with dreams. Dark forms of bloody phantoms—the dim shadows of the waking world hovered around him. Again the lifeless form of his friend was borne in to blast the eyes of his distracted wife, who raved and shrieked in her despair. Little Ellen again moved about, pale and terrified; and the strange faces and heavy tread of common men came and went in the details of those arrangements, so cold to those who perform, so thrilling to those who behold them.

Morning again dawned. Long before the gray light had paled the stars, Claude was up, and all things were ready to bear for ever away the sad remains of the loved one. The rude men came in again, their heavy steps echoing upon the uncarpeted floors and corridors. The coffin, that uncouth shape which differs so strangely from the same melancholy image in England and America, was about to be closed.

The solemn, awful dead! Claude gazed long and deeply. The features were settled from the stern look which they had worn, into a peaceful smile and an unearthly beauty, such as often comes over the dead ere they are withdrawn for ever from the light of earth.

“Alas!” he thought, as he perused those fixed and rigid features, “cold habitant of abodes we know not of! thou seest not! thou hearest not! Thou wast as I am. I must be as thou! Mayst thou carry with thee into the dark realm of eternity the peace thou hast taken from those who remain behind!”

"Ready, sir?" said the undertaker, offering to lift on the lid.

At this moment Ellen, her cheeks almost as white as those beside him; came to the door and beckoned Claude. He went to her. He stooped down and kissed her little quivering lips. She returned his embrace with a fond affection, as if she appreciated the kindness and wisdom of his character and conduct. Then she drew him by the hand along into the room of Mrs. Denham without saying anything.

"Mr. Wyndham," said Mrs. Denham, "one farewell look!"

Claude had dreaded this, and he turned away his head.

"I entreat—I implore! I am perfectly calm. Only one! I will be silent. I will be all myself. There is a power above. He will hold, He will sustain me. One parting look! do not fear for me—one—only!"

"Come, then," said Claude, feeling that the shock might perhaps be of service, by bringing her feelings to a crisis.

Step by step—faltering—trembling—quivering in every fibre—the agitation of the moment thrilling them both, they passed slowly into the room. The homely menials stood away as they approached, and Claude regretted, long ere he reached the spot, the permission he had accorded. It was, however, too late. Mrs. Denham advanced. She uncovered the face. The faint gray beams of the early day fell coldly upon it. She gazed a moment. The silence was unbroken, when a shriek, piercing and wild—another—and another, announced how much she had overrated her own strength.

The early labourer stopped in the street; the peasant woman rested her burden, stood and listened; and the windows of the surrounding houses were thrown suddenly open, while Claude bore a senseless form upon his arm from the room.

The last star was yet visible in heaven as he return-

ed from the neglected spot where the *duellist* was committed to the bosom of our common mother, hastening unbidden into the presence of his Creator, and leaving behind him broken hearts and broken fortunes.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME days passed away. Time goes on, however it is with us. There are events which seem great enough to stop him, but he still goes on. He stays not for the lover. He whirls away all his light dreams, and he equally carries on the wretch to the end. After all, it does not so greatly matter how we fare in a vessel which crosses but such a narrow sea, and which no opposing wind can keep back a moment from its destined and dark harbour.

Mrs. Denham recovered from the violence of her grief. She was pale, thin, and haggard; but she was again as others are, moving about, with her particular grief treasured in her own bosom. It seems strange how much we can endure, and yet eat, and drink, and sleep, and smile, and run the daily routine of familiar life. But the heart is made to endure. It is like a ship sent abroad upon the ocean, framed not only to glide over the smooth seas, but to cope with the billow and the whirlwind. There are in it corresponding principles of buoyancy. Behold it careering loftily, with swollen canvass and flying banner, moving like a god almost, over the beautiful, obedient deep. The tempest bursts upon it, and fearful is the struggle. It is worn, and torn, and broken. Its tall sails are rent, its gay banner is gone, and its spars strew the ocean; but, when the sunshine comes again, lo! it is there. Not the same, but it is there.

To Claude this unhappy girl now owed everything.

She was actually penniless. The money they had brought with them in cash was absorbed in the expenses of the funeral, mourning purchases, paying servants, of which they had two, a courier and a *femme de chambre*, whom Mrs. Denham was now obliged to pay. The courier was saucy, and demanded more than was just. He would have been paid but for Claude. The man was extremely insolent, and, seizing the valuable watch which Mr. Denham had worn, swore he would carry it off unless paid. Claude entered the room at the moment, sent to the police, had him arrested, and compelled him to make an humble apology and to beg for pardon, which, but at the request of her he had so brutally insulted, would not have been accorded.

The letter of credit, usually carried by travellers, Mrs. Denham instantly enclosed to the bankers who had given it; knowing that the money she might draw on it would not now be refunded.

"I am totally ruined," said she to Claude. "I have positively nothing. Even were we at home, I should be in a state of destitution. My father has been unfortunate, and is not in a situation to offer us a home. Here I am worse; I am even in debt, and without the means of returning to England."

"No, madam," said Claude. "You must excuse me for the liberty I have taken, but I have procured you another letter of credit upon my own account. I have ordered in all your bills. They are paid. This is the letter of credit. It is for one hundred pounds."

"Mr. Wyndham!" faltered Mrs. Denham, while little Ellen stole up to him, took his hand, and pressed it against her lips.

"I am your husband's friend," said Claude. "He has, however rashly and unnecessarily, sacrificed his life in my cause, and he has bequeathed you to my care. I will hear of no denial. Indeed, it is already done. You had better return to London at once. I know a lady—the kindest, the best in the world—who

is going almost immediately; she will be a mother, a sister, a friend to you. It is Madame Wharton, of whom I have so often spoken."

"But this money—I am entirely without resources—I can never repay it. Propriety—delicacy—honesty, all demand that I should decline it."

"It is very well to talk in this way," said Claude, "but I must tell you plainly, if you were ever so disposed to resist, you cannot. I must exert the authority with which I am invested; and, if you will not permit me to be your brother, I am, in my own right, your guardian."

"Dearest Mr. Wyndham," said Ellen, coming to him as he sat, and putting her arm round his neck, "how good, how kind you are! God will bless you for your generosity to us. If she will not take the money, give it to *me*. I know you are sincere, and that you will be glad to help us out of Berlin. Oh, if uncle Charles had acted like you. What harm did Mr. Elkington do him, after all, by striking him? *You* were struck, and you are as well as you were before, and as good; and if he had killed you too, we should have had no friend. I'll take the money, and carry sister Mary back to London, and we shall bless you and pray for you, night and day, as long as we live."

"Sweet child!" said Claude, folding to his bosom the ingenuous little being, whose mind saw truth unclouded by sophistry or worldly example; "and, since I am to transact business hereafter with you, not with your disobedient sister, I shall tell you what else I have done. We need not care whether she likes it or not."

"No, indeed."

"I have directed £100 to be annually held by my banker, payable to your sister's order. See, she's going to contradict us; but we must teach her obedience to her new masters."

Mrs. Denham buried her face in her handkerchief.

At nine o'clock the next evening, Claude conduct-

ed Mrs. Denham and her young companion to the office of the *poste*, where he presented them to Madame Wharton. He had taken the *coupé*, and they were comfortably arranged alone.

The merry horn sounded again, and the clattering horses' hoofs struck fire from the pavement as they stood stamping in the court. Madame Wharton and Claude were already so knit in the bonds of friendship that he seemed to have known her all his life. Their parting was in a corresponding degree warm and affectionate. She folded him to her bosom, and, somewhat to his astonishment, imprinted a kiss upon his forehead. He was going to make some lively comment upon the rapid progress of their friendship, when he perceived her cheeks bathed in tears. As he bade farewell to Mrs. Denham, the poor girl's convulsive movements betrayed how her soul was shaken; but she took the handkerchief from her face one moment, and her eyes met his.

"Mr. Wyndham," she said, extending her hand, "I cannot reply—I cannot—but God will bless your future steps. There is one thing I must say before we leave, if my heart breaks with it; in my delirium the other day, I wronged you by charging upon *you* the catastrophe—the fatal—the—"

She paused a moment, unable to proceed.

"I wronged you," she at length continued; "and every step I have heard of yours—every tone of your voice since—and every act of kindness and generosity, reproaches my folly and guilt in having done so."

Claude was deeply moved by this address, though it fell upon his burning soul like a balm.

"You have acted right—wisely—nobly. Charles has—"

The new agony of grief impeded her utterance.

"Allons, messieurs, *en route*," cried the conducteur, cracking his whip.

"Mr. Wyndham—dearest Mr. Wyndham," said Ellen, putting up her lips, her eyes streaming with

tears, "good-by. Oh, I wish we could live with you always."

"And remember, dearest child," Claude whispered in her ear before he lifted her into the carriage, "in me you have a friend. Write to me sometimes. My address is at my banker's; and I promise, whatever you ask, I will always comply, as if I were your father."

The *portières* were closed with a slam. The *voyageurs* in the *voiture* were ready. Adieus full of mirth and joy were exchanged between parting friends. The cumbrous vehicle dashed off into the street; a handkerchief was waved to him out of the window as it was lost in the shadow, he could not distinguish by whom; and tears, sad but sweet, relieved his aching heart, and enabled him to breathe more freely, now that the curtain had fallen over the closing scene of the tragedy in which he had borne such a painful rôle. As he walked home through the crowded streets, the cool air fell soothingly upon his face, as if the breath of angels were mingled with it. He paced on through the narrow *König Strasse*—crossed the bridge, where the colossal equestrian statue of the great elector frowned upon him through the shadows—and beheld the vast *Schloss* rising against the summer heaven, as it had stood for centuries, and beneath whose roof he had spent so many happy hours amid those royal gayeties which fascinated him so much on his first arrival. He had calm but high thoughts of life, and, man as he was, wended his lonely way homeward. He walked the earth as one willing to quit it, and certain of a brighter abode.

"Strange life!" he thought; "yet why should he mourn who has done no wrong? Already the events which have so harrowed me are swept into the past; already they have become shadows. The frowns and the cold looks of that gay society, who have condemned me unheard for following the dictates of reason, humanity, and religion—the blow of Elkington—the

thoughts of the rash—the sneers of the unfeeling—the dead face of Denham—the bursting sobs of the new-made widow—the horror and anguish of my own soul, swerving from its path at the shocks of fortune—already they have ceased to be realities. They are memories—they are vanished dreams. Is it for these that I would sacrifice *right*, which is eternal?"

It was ten when he reached his hotel. The responsibility which had rested on him was now at an end. He felt exhausted, and tired nature asked repose. The thoughts which had preyed upon him ceased their task, and a tender languor overspread his soul. The world was against him. He had disregarded its rules—its vile customs—its antique, bloody opinions. He had received *a blow!* It had not stained him. It had left him free to act, as the pale moon is free to keep on her Heaven-appointed course, even when the dog howls at her, and the maniac treads on her uninjured light, and swears she is unchaste. Was *he* to blame, that Denham, knowing his opinions, had sought his fate? *Well* he knew (and the thought gave him perfect quiet on that point), had he been able to prevent his meeting his enemy by sacrificing his own life, he would have done so without a moment's hesitation. He had done *all* in his power, and the dark consequences were shaped by Heaven's inscrutable decree, which the blind mortal must bow to without seeking a cause. It is the privilege of principle to be able to turn to Providence, whatever may grow out of its conscientious action, without fear. It can murmur to its Creator, "It is not I, oh God! but *thou*."

As he threw himself upon the bed, a voice beneath the window—some wandering lover, perhaps, serenading his mistress—broke forth into the following song by Curran. The voice of the singer was clear, melodious, and gave to the music, of no common sweetness, the charm of taste and feeling.

G 2

“ Oh sleep! a while thy power suspending,
 Weigh not yet my eyelids down;
 For memory see! with eve attending,
 Claims a moment for her own.
 I know her by her robe of mourning,
 I know her by her faded light;
 When, faithful with the gloom returning,
 She comes to bid—a sad ‘good-night.’

“ Oh let me hear, with bosom swelling,
 While she sighs o’er time that’s past;
 Oh let me weep, while she is telling,
 Of joys that pine, and pangs that last.
 And now, oh sleep, while grief is streaming,
 Let thy balm sweet peace restore,
 While fearful hope through tears is beaming,
 Sooth to rest that wakes no more !”

CHAPTER XII.

CLAUDE NOW made the necessary preparations to leave Berlin. He had laid before the police an account of the manner in which he had been twice attacked; but, having no information to give, they could do nothing for him but offer him a passport with as little delay as possible. He was resolved, however, not to leave till he had in some degree counteracted the calumnies of Elkington. He had written to the Marquis of E——, who, with Lord Perceval, was perfectly acquainted with his curious history, and perhaps knew more of it than he felt at liberty to disclose. The reply was a letter so decisive and flattering, that he almost hesitated to submit it to any one’s inspection. He, however, concluded to send it to Carolan; and, fearful of having it returned, like the last, unopened, he determined to enclose it to General St. Hillaire, who had so nobly, and with such dignity, defended him against the last insolence of Elkington. He accordingly wrote him the following note :

"MY DEAR GENERAL,

"I am about leaving Berlin, but cannot do so without performing a certain duty to myself, the necessity of which imboldens me to address this request to you. It is also proper that your generous confidence in me should be confirmed; and I beg therefore to enclose to you the accompanying letter from the Marquis of E——; a gentleman, I believe, whom Count Carolan corresponds with, and whose opinions may have some weight. I have a kind of right to press this letter on Count Carolan, who has openly exhibited an acquiescence in the misstatements of Elkington. I leave to his own sense of right the task of protecting my name hereafter. As to my *courage*—a suspicion of it can only be removed by those occasions which Providence sends, enough to try the temper of our souls on earth, and to furnish us an opportunity to display it to the world when vanity requires. If circumstances have raised a doubt of mine, it is a misfortune which, like shipwreck or pestilence, every man is liable to, and which, if chance does not remedy it, patience must endure. Having deliberately adopted a principle upon this point, I shall adhere to it and abide the consequences. From all *other* doubts the letter of the Marquis of E—— rescues me; and, after perusing it, Count Carolan will at least do me the justice to express himself satisfied, and to acknowledge that my past life has been as irreproachable as it has been unfortunate.

"For yourself, my dearest general, accept my thanks for the manner in which you have interested yourself in my favour. That there are many persons above the prejudices of the day, and who can find other motives for the course I have chosen than vulgar fear, I am convinced; but as the first who boldly took part with the poor and the insulted, and whose superior wisdom comprehended his actions, you will never be forgotten by your sincere and grateful friend,

"CLAUDE WYNDHAM."

Claude to Count Carolan.

“SIR,

“I send you, through General St. Hillaire, a letter from the Marquis of E——, furnishing a brief history of my past life, from his knowledge of my character and conduct. The apparent indelicacy of presenting an eulogium so partial, as well as my repugnance to open any farther communication with one whose good opinion has been withdrawn with a publicity so unjust, would secure you against further intrusion of me or my affairs; but a name which, however unadorned with rank or affluence, I have endeavoured to keep at least unstained — gives me the right to deny with proof whatever has been asserted with falsehood and believed with haste. I bestow no attention on Elkington, because he is wilfully wrong; and I offer this explanation to you, because I think you only carelessly so. That you *are* wrong your perusal of the letter enclosed will compel you to allow, and my slandered character induces me to *demand* the acknowledgment.

“I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,
“C. WYNDHAM.”

: An hour afterward, the Marquis of E——’s letter and his own were returned unopened to Claude in one from Carolan, containing the following lines :

“MR. WYNDHAM : SIR,

“I enclose the letter of the Marquis of E——, as well as your own, without any other reply to the ‘*demand*’ you make for an acknowledgment of ‘error’ than that men’s opinions are their own, and differ in many points more doubtful and important. There is an account at my banker’s of £50, which I will thank you to settle.

“Your obedient servant,
“CAROLAN.”

Claude tore the letter into pieces and dropped it on

the floor. Its injustice and insolence he felt for a moment bitterly ; but he thought him an ass, and then dismissed the subject from his mind, he trusted, for ever.

He had scarcely done so when the footman brought in two more letters. One was in his banker's hand, which he welcomed with pleasure. He had not only long since used all his ready cash, but he had considerably anticipated his income. His late payments for Mrs. Denham had caused him to do this ; and as for the £50 for which, in a casual transaction with Carolan respecting a horse, he had become indebted to him, and which that gentleman so singularly demanded, he had really, until now, forgotten to repay it. Nor did he find, in the pertinacity with which it was demanded, anything more than the desire of a little mind to avail itself of the most trifling opportunity of offering an insult. Since his payments for Mrs. Denham, in fact, he had not the means to refund it till the receipt of the usual remittance from his London banker, which he had some time before written for, and which he now every day expected. He opened the present letter, therefore, with a feeling of pleasure, as affording the means to settle his accounts and quit Berlin immediately. It was not without reading it over two or three times that he was able to comprehend its full import. It was as follows :

“ London, —.

“ SIR,

“ We beg to inform you, for your government, that the sum hitherto deposited in our hands on your account has been withheld for the ensuing year, and we are instructed that it will not hereafter be continued.

“ We are also grieved to inform you, that, upon the presentation of your last draught, we were under the unpleasant necessity of declining to accept it, on account of the irregularity attending your having drawn it considerably in advance of your income.

“ We annex a statement of your account, wherein

you will perceive that your draughts amount to £563 when, as your income up to the 1st of June

amounts to 525

leaves at your debit £38
of which we request you will take due note, in order to reimburse immediately the balance, which we are instructed to desire with the least possible delay.

“ We remain, sir,

“ Your very obedient servants,

“ N. B. & Co.”

CHAPTER XIII.

It often happens that a misfortune falls upon us precisely at the time when we are least able to bear it. This was now the case with Claude. He had not overdrawn his salary at any former time, nor had he ever been in debt. But Rossi had been a considerable tax upon him. The £100 to Mrs. Denham had taken all his means. He was naturally careless of money, and he now found, with alarm and horror, that his expenses amounted to considerably more than he had the power to pay. He would be unable even to discharge his hotel bill. He owed about £30 besides the £38 to the London banker, and a small protested draught. The note of Carolan now startled him. It now wore a different aspect, but it was still as full of mystery as of perplexity. It was a demand of payment of the £50, couched in terms intentionally insulting, and implying a suspicion that it might not be liquidated. With all his fancied self-discipline, his blood boiled at the idea of an insult; but one thus deliberately preferred by a man to whom he owed money he could not pay, had a character of its own not at all agreeable. He had promised Carolan at their last in-

terview to settle it at once. He had thus far neglected doing so, in consequence of the whirl of affairs in which he had been involved.

Perhaps of all the evils which can befall a man, poverty, if not the very worst, is, as society is constructed, the most difficult to endure with cheerfulness, and the most full of bitter humiliations and pains. Sickness has its periods of convalescence, and even guilt of repentance and reformation. For the loss of friends time affords relief, and religion and philosophy open consolation. But poverty is unremitting misery, perplexity, restlessness, and shame. It is the vulture of Prometheus. It is the rock of Sisyphus. It throws over the universal world an aspect which only the poor can see and know. The woes of life become more terrible, because they fall unalleviated upon the heart; and its pleasures sicken even more than its woes as they are beheld by those who cannot enjoy them. The poor man in society is almost a felon. The cold openly sneer, and the arrogant insult with impunity. The very earth joins his enemies, and spreads verdant glades and tempting woods where his foot may never tread. The very sky, with a human malice, when his fellow-beings have turned him beneath its dome, bites him with bitter winds and drenches him with pitiless tempests. He almost ceases to be a man, and yet he is lower than the brute; for they are clothed and fed, and have their dens; but the penniless wanderer, turned with suspicion from the gate of the noble or the thatched roof of the poor, is helplessly adrift amid more dangers and pains than befall any other creature.

In an instant—from his easy station—when, self-dependent, he could smile at Elkington, and turn his back upon Carolan and the world—the proud and haughty Wyndham was reduced to utter and hopeless destitution. He was literally beggared. He was worse than beggared. He was in debt, and he saw no means of extricating himself. One of his debts, too, was to a

man who hated and despised him, and who had shown himself capable of insulting the more openly as he found his victim the more defenceless. This was a position which startled him with peculiar horror. What was he to do? How was he to pay the liabilities he had contracted? How was he to leave Berlin? Where was he to go? In what way was he hereafter to maintain himself? These questions pressed themselves upon his mind with a fierce importunity, resembling nothing which he had ever before experienced, and producing the strangest effect upon his thoughts and feelings.

"Well," said he, pacing his room to and fro slowly, "I am then a beggar. I am a debtor. From what cruel hand can this new blow proceed? What can it mean? Can I live? How? With what hope of happiness or honour? Life to me was already deprived of nearly every charm! What will it now become? Had I not better have fallen beneath the aim of El-kington? Had I not better, as a Roman would, leave voluntarily the earth, where I seem to have no more a right to dwell?"

But these thoughts soon gave way to others calmer and more sensible.

"I am in the hands of Him who can lift up and put down at pleasure. Were suicide even right in itself, it would not be so in me. I am a debtor. I would rest in my grave without wronging any one of a shilling. I am young, strong, and healthy. I will not be idle. I will seek some occupation, I do not care how toilsome or mean. The world? I have already shown that, while I respect its honest opinions, I despise its prejudices. Its scorn and hisses are nothing to me when I do not deserve them. I will descend into a lower class of life, as the taunting Carolan advised me. I will labour, if it is at the plough. I will do anything rather than live dependant, idle, or in debt."

Nervous and agitated by this formidable prospect, he continued walking to and fro, endeavouring to calm

the tumult of his mind, and decide instantly upon some future line of conduct. Many were the singular ideas which occurred to him. He was now unable to escape from the assassin who pursued him so mysteriously. Mrs. Denham would find the annuity he had settled upon her stopped. He must write to her immediately. What would Carolan say when he found he had broken his promise to deposite the money? What would the banker say on receiving news of his protested bill? What would the few who still defended him in the society where he had once been so flatteringly received — what would they think and say upon finding Elkington's prophecies true? That he was an adventurer without means? Madame Wharton, General St. Hillaire, Monsieur and Madame de N——, and half a dozen others, who had always remained kind towards him, and who even generously and confidently offered their intimacy with him—would not even they now fall off? Would not the pompous and conceited Carolan, whose mind and heart seemed filled with egotism, to the exclusion of sense and feeling, now have facts of his own to state against him? Had he *not* broken his word? Had he not borrowed money which he was unable to pay? Sharp was the pang with which he revolved these thoughts; another day passed away, we will not describe how painfully. The next morning he determined to go forth into the air, hoping that a walk, his favourite resource in moments of agitation, would cool the fever of his blood, and suggest some more favourable view of his prospects.

He had taken his hat and was about leaving the room, when a man entered. He was a *chasseur* of Count Carolan's. He had known him previously, and had remarked in him a watchful attention to his wishes, and a profound respect almost ludicrous. There was now a change in his manner. He came in without knocking, slammed the door after him, and neither took off his hat nor raised his hand as was his custom.

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"Monsieur le Comte sends this letter, and begs an answer."

Claude looked at him with astonishment, then broke the seal. As he did so, the man walked around the room, examined the pictures upon the walls, and half hummed a tune. The letter ran thus :

"Count Carolan begs that Mr. Wyndham will give the bearer the £50, or that he will name an hour during the day that he will deposite the sum at his banker's. He will please to communicate with the bearer."

"Do you know the contents of this letter?" demanded Claude.

"Oui, monsieur."

"Tell your master I will see the banker upon the subject in the course of the morning."

"Non, monsieur. It must be done at once. Monsieur le Comte requested me not to leave you without either the money, or your distinct promise to pay it at a fixed hour to-day. Monsieur le Comte has sent to the police also to stop your passport."

"My passport! The police!"

"Oui, monsieur," said the man, with a smile; at the same time arranging his cravat and collar somewhat affectedly.

There is something in petty insolence more difficult to endure than in insults more pronounced. Claude felt all his self-government necessary to restrain him from thrusting the fellow down stairs.

"I will see the banker at two this morning," said Claude; "or, if your master wishes, I will see himself."

"Non, monsieur; Monsieur le Comte does not wish to see you. He wishes you to transact business with me."

"With you?"

"Oui, monsieur;" and he sat down upon the sofa; "and I wish you to make haste, if you please, for I too am a little pressed. Monsieur might as well give the money, or worse may come of it."

"When your master sends a messenger whom a gentleman can receive or a gentleman would send," said Claude, "I will return an answer."

"Oh, very well, monsieur," said the man. "You mean to be impertinent, I see. I shall wait, however, till Monsieur le Comte sends another messenger, which he will probably do presently."

And he very coolly raised his legs upon the sofa, and, reaching a book, opened it with the air of a young lord looking into the last new novel.

It is said that there is an end to all things. However that may be respecting other matters, there was certainly an end to Claude's patience. He grasped, very leisurely, the fellow by the throat, and lifted him unceremoniously to the door.

"You shall give me the satisfaction of a gentleman, you shall—or I'll *post* you," said the man.

The next moment he was thrust down stairs at some peril to his neck.

"Well," said Claude, heated and indignant, "I commence my new condition well. Is it possible that Carolan can have already heard the change in my fortune? Who could tell him? What mystery surrounds me? What devils are sporting with my destiny?"

He once more took his hat, but he was again interrupted by the waiter of the hotel.

"Ah! by-the-way," said Claude, "I forgot I had rung; but did you see that fellow whom I put out of my room just now?"

"Yes," said the man, bluntly.

"Well, never let him enter my door again."

"He's got as much right here as others," said the man, quietly; "perhaps more."

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" said Claude.

"Civil words, mein herr," said the man. "There's your bill!"

"My bill! I did not order it."

"No, I suppose not."

The truth crossed his mind.

"Well, put it on the table. I'll look over it."

The man went out and left the door open.

"Come back," said Claude, "and shut the door after you."

The fellow turned his face, whistled, and went on his way without paying him the slightest attention.

"Ah! I forgot," thought Claude. "I am poor. It is already known." And, with a heavy heart, he made a third attempt to walk, which was luckily successful, though, as he went out, the landlord and waiter eyed him with suspicion which almost indicated an intention to stop him.

Sad were his thoughts as he sought once again his favourite retreats in the *Thiergarten*; and it was characteristic of him, that the disappointment to which his adversity would subject Rossi, and particularly Mrs. Denham and Ellen, gave him, much pain, even amid his gloomy views of his own future affairs. Embarrassment, humiliation, and actual want stared him in the face.

It was deep noon as he found himself in the centre of the wood. The Park at this hour, in the middle of a summer day, appears like the cool abodes of the blessed. It is almost entirely deserted by human intruders. The labourers are at their toil; the fashion-hunters are generally abroad elsewhere at the various watering-places in search of pleasure, and those in town postpone their drive till the sultry heat has given way to the cool afternoon shadows. Scarcely any one is seen, except some student with his book, his long hair, unshorn beard, open collar, and velvet coat, giving to him the appearance of an Italian of the middle ages; or perhaps a bronzed peasant-woman dropping beneath a heavy burden, or an officer riding along the deeply-shaded avenues, his bright uniform, nodding feather, and horse glancing through the trees. The breath of this charming wood was cool and fragrant, as its moist paths and fanciful bridges are pro-

fusely fringed with flowers. The little islands lay in the motionless water fresh and green. The birds called to each other through the silent glades. The beak of the woodpecker made the forest resound, and the squirrels leaped, paused, and listened in the road; and the swans, those most beautiful objects in creation, when throned on the water, gave to the landscape the air of some enchanted island, which might have intreated the perennial bowers of Calypso and her nymphs; "and never," thought Claude, "did the son of Ulysses meet danger more formidable, and the dear guide of his steps far away."

Beautiful did this calm, bright world look to Claude on that morning; but the topics which pressed immediately upon him left him little leisure for his ordinary and almost voluptuous enjoyment of nature. Something must be done at once; action—instant action was demanded. He could not, without a kind of dishonesty, sleep that night in the hotel. Where was he to sleep? He had no friend to whom he could disclose his new calamity; and if he had, taken in conjunction with all that had happened, could they believe him? How was he to pay his debts? How was he to procure food for the sustenance of life? He had a valuable wardrobe; watch, rings, diamond pin; a horse, saddle, bridle. He thought these might bring enough to pay Carolan, the banker in London, and his bills in Berlin. He determined, without hesitation, to sell everything—to the very coat he had on, rather than wrong any one. He resolved to dress himself at once in clothes befitting his new state. He resolved to listen to no false pride or shame. Honour, he felt, was in itself, not in "the trappings and the suits" in which men too often look for it. As to occupation, there was but one. His own taste had rendered him a proficient in languages. He made a wry face at it, but, before he had walked an hour he had come to the resolution to offer himself that day as a *teacher of English*. The smile—the sneer—the

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scornful whisper of those who had predicted his downfall, when they should witness it, rose before him. But his mind was *really* brave, and the habit of looking to itself—and to its Maker for right, enabled him to bear up against these painful anticipations. As for *the blow* which he had at first thought could never leave his mind—already, in the wholesome exercise of action, in the preparations to meet the real exigences and sober duties of life, he had forgotten it. Even Ida, now that occupation had displaced idle reveries, he regarded with cooler judgment. His love for her was far from being abated. It was even increased by what had happened. But it was divested of hope. It had assumed the character of an enchanting dream—to sooth sometimes hereafter his solitary moments—to compensate him for the homely cares of life—to be gazed at, as the mariner watches the polar star, who, without thinking to reach it, makes it the guide of his steps.

While pursuing these thoughts he had penetrated into the most solitary and unfrequented recesses, where indeed there was no regular footpath, but only green lanes winding through thick shrubbery, and lofty trees for the accommodation of single horsemen. He had reached the end of his walk and was preparing to return, when his foot struck against something heavy, which he would have taken to be a stone but for a peculiar sound. He passed on for several moments, but retraced his steps. He had even some difficulty in discovering the spot. It was moist earth, and the long grass and thick surrounding shrubbery showed that it was rarely trodden by the foot of man. After feeling about for some time with his foot, he struck the object again. It was half buried in the ground. He picked it up. It was a stout leathern purse, quite full. He opened it. The contents were Louis. He sat down and counted them. There were two hundred and fifty. He emerged from the shadowy recess and looked around. Not a person was to be seen. He gazed

upward. The branches hung motionless and solitary. Though he half expected to behold some human face gazing on him, the wood was as hushed as at midnight, except occasionally the woodpecker tapped the hollow trunk of the beech; or an acorn fell, dropping through the leaves; or a squirrel stood erect, listening and starting, close to his side, as if watching against every intruder; or the crow, which slowly floated over him close to the tree-tops, uttered his hoarse cry. He looked at the purse again. It was wet, mildewed, and nearly decayed. The clasp was covered with mould. It had possibly been months—perhaps years where he had found it.

He advanced towards home. A ragged man met him. His features were bloated with intemperance. His face was haggard, and yet vicious in its expression, and he was almost destitute of clothing.

“A penning!” said he, holding out his hand.

Claude gave him a groschen. He looked at it, surprised at receiving so much more than he had asked for, and went away looking back once or twice. He little knew how near he had been to wealth. Claude thought of the blessing which that money would be to him and to himself, but he thought of it without wavering. He knew the course of right was fixed, and was not only the noblest; but the most advantageous to pursue.

“Elkington has accused me of dishonourable intentions,” he thought. “I could have shot him for the slander. But what would that prove? Here Heaven sends me an occasion to confute the charge by my conduct!”

And, had he been about to expend the money in pleasure, he could not have felt more impatience than he experienced to return the new-found treasure to its owner.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON re-entering the town, Claude cast his eyes upon the walls, trees, and fences where public bills were usually posted, and which he never thought of regarding before. There were the advertisements of concerts in the gardens—of fireworks—menageries—theatres—auctions, etc., etc. At length one larger than the rest, conspicuously headed “100 *thalers* reward,” met his eye. On examining it, he read as follows :

“Lost, on the 1st of January, in or about the town, a leathern purse containing 250 Louis. The finder will receive the above reward on presenting the purse at the *comtoir* of Monsieur Kühl, No. 433 Kloster Strasse.”

The bill was blackened, weather-worn, and nearly effaced. A part of it had been torn off by some idle hand, and a staring new advertisement of a “*Grosses Concert*” was pasted nearly over it, as a thing passed and forgotten. Claude instantly bent his way towards the counting-house of Monsieur Kühl.

On arriving at the house, he entered the *comtoir*, and found himself, after passing an antechamber, in a large apartment filled with clerks behind high desks and counters ; he inquired for Mr. Kühl, and was asked for his card, which the young man, after reading, not without marks of interest, carried into his *chef*. The young man presently returned, and desired him to walk into a private room. Mr. Kühl was writing. He was one of the richest bankers in Berlin—a large, plain-looking person, not dressed with much neatness. One could scarcely have conceived, from his appearance, that he was worth millions. He looked up and rose, and himself handed a chair.

“I have the honour of speaking to Mr. Claude

Wyndham, the gentleman lately connected with the dreadful affair which has happened in our town, and created such a sensation."

Claude acquiesced.

"I am very happy to see you, Mr. Wyndham. Do not blush, young man," said Mr. Kühl, for Claude coloured at the allusion. "I am the father of three sons, as hot after gunpowder as if it were good wine; and I have learned, with great admiration, your whole conduct in this affair. Don't blush, sir, to have set your face against duelling. You have acted nobly. Every father—every mother—every wife and child in the universe ought to bless and support you. Such an example is worthy a hero. Sir Walter Raleigh did the same; and I think I have heard that Washington, the great American soldier and statesman, did the same. Sir, in the name of my family—in the name of mankind, I thank you."

And the honest man, who had risen in his enthusiasm, seized his hand and shook it heartily.

"Sir," said Claude, "I have acted according to my conscience; and your approbation, as a stranger, is grateful to me."

"Conscience, sir? I'm glad to find a man of your appearance, and moving in your exalted rank of life, has one. The young folks of the day generally are without it. Egad, their corsets are laced so tight that there isn't room for it."

And he laughed loudly at his humour.

"I shall always be too proud if Mr. Wyndham will honour me by a visit; my wife and daughters want to see you. You are prayed for in our family. You have saved bloodshed."

"I? Indeed, sir!"

"My son has met you somewhere, and, it seems, has a great esteem for you. I don't wonder, sir; egad! now I look at you, I don't wonder. Well, sir, this young whipper-snapper—he's only nineteen—must get into a quarrel with another blockhead. My boy

was *struck*—swords were chosen—the ground was selected—and the young fools would have cut each other's ears and noses off as sure as fate, if Madame Wharton had not happened to come in. I'm her banker, sir. She visits our family—God bless her! and a noble creature she is. She gave us your history, sir. My son heard how you had borne a blow—passing it over with the contempt it merited rather than commit a crime. It made a deep impression on him—for the boy has a soul. He went to his adversary, and told him he had come to exchange apologies. They did so, and are now the best friends possible. One bold example goes far, particularly with the young. Let a few more men like you thus discountenance duelling, and it will fall into the hands of vulgar blackguards and cutthroats, where alone it deserves to be sanctioned. Sir, I honour you; and if ever I can serve you in any way, command me to any extent. My house—my purse are at your service."

"I have not come to take purses to-day, but to give them," said Claude, whom this narration had restored to a part of his natural ease and gayety of manner.

"You are named as the person to receive a large sum of gold lost in January."

"Well, sir!"

"Here it is."

"Why, where on earth did you light upon it?"

"I found it this morning in the Park."

"By Heaven! you know not what you've done." He seized his hat. "You shall take a walk with me. It is not far. I will show you something which will repay your trouble."

Claude began to think the old gentleman was crazy, from the rapidity with which he went puffing and blowing along through the streets, muttering half-uttered exclamations of impatience and joy.

"Here we are," said Monsieur Kühl.

They stopped before a little, low, poor-looking house in Frederic Strasse. Monsieur Kühl hurried

up to the fifth story and knocked. The door was opened by a little old lady, neatly dressed, but with a pale countenance. Nothing could be more scanty than the furniture of the room. Upon a mean bed, lay the form of another female—an invalid—and a little poorly-clothed child sat on the floor, eating a piece of dry, black bread.

“Come in! come up! ha! ha! ha! Mon Dieu! I’ve brought a visiter. Come up, monsieur.”

The little old lady courtesied with an air of good breeding, which strangely contrasted with the poverty-stricken appearance of the things around her.

“Pray be seated,” said she, handing the two broken chairs.

“I want you to relate to this monsieur your history,” said Mr. Kühl. “Be brief, for he’s a hard-hearted dog, and won’t bear any amplifications.”

The old lady looked rather surprised.

“I really don’t know,” said she, in French, “why I should trouble monsieur with miseries which he—”

“Nach! obey me,” said Monsieur Kühl. “Tell it. I am sure it will amuse him. He’s extremely fond of tragedy.”

“I do not know what you mean,” said the old lady; “but I know you are my only friend, Mr. Kühl, and I shall comply.”

“And in the very fewest words possible,” added Kühl.

“Well, then, we are two poor sisters. Our parents were rich, but lost all their fortune, and then their lives. We had one sister. She was governess in the family of a Russian nobleman. For twenty years we scarcely heard anything of her, till one day the news arrived of her death. She had amassed, sir, a considerable sum, about 250 louis-d’ors. We were old and destitute, and she had consigned this money on her dying bed to a servant of her patron, who had permission to travel. He brought it to Berlin, and here he *lost it*—so at least he says. His master had reason to believe that he had

gambled it away, and he is at this instant in Siberia. This has been the last we ever heard of our little property; my poor surviving sister is an invalid, and we are struggling along with as much resignation as possible."

"There is your money!" said Kühl. "Hand it out, Mr. Wyndham."

And it was with a sincere feeling of satisfaction that Claude laid the purse upon the table.

"Count them," said Mr. Kühl.

She did so.

"There are 250."

"Now you are happy, and independent for life."

"And that poor innocent being in Siberia!" said she.

Tears came to the eyes of the desolate little old lady, and the invalid half rose in her bed to gaze.

"There is a reward, you know," said Kühl.

"Not a cent," said Claude. "I would not mingle this pleasure with any interested feeling for the world."

"I thought as much," said Kühl.

"Who are you, sir?" said the lady, turning to Claude.

"No matter. I will come and see you again by-and-by. In the mean time, you had better let Mr. Kühl take charge of your new-found prize, for it would not be pleasant to lose it again."

CHAPTER XV.

THE mightiest changes which take place in the human heart affect but little the outward world, and revolutions of the affairs of an individual interrupts but slightly the order of affairs. The *société* of Berlin, as well as a large part of the people, went to Spandow to behold the mock seige of that fortress. Claude had

determined to take no notice of the late occurrence which had so materially altered his condition, and not to *shrink* from being seen from any false shame. He determined to see this interesting military festival, and to mount his horse for the last time before he sold him. He therefore rode out with the crowd—carriages full of ladies and gentlemen, royal equipages, and thousands of equestrians and pedestrians: it was a general *fête*. When he reached Spandow, he left his horse at an inn and ascended the ramparts. The scene was already beginning to be animated. Large bodies of troops were disposed for defence upon the walls, and at the windows of the houses overlooking the ramparts, amounting to about twenty thousand; as many more were also disposed before the walls preparatory to the attack. For a long time crowds of spectators came thronging into the town. Claude secured a very good place on the ramparts, surrounded by troops, bombshells, cannons, etc.

As he stood here, with a group of gentlemen, awaiting the opening of the attack, a young man of genteel address, but whom he had never met in society, addressed him in French.

"This is a very pretty scene, sir. We shall have a good view as we stand."

Claude replied politely, and the stranger was pleased to continue the conversation.

"Do you reside in Berlin?" inquired the young man.

"I am a traveller," said Claude. "I have been in Berlin during the winter."

"I hope you like our metropolis."

"Very much."

"Have you been much in society?"

"Yes, a good deal."

"It is very brilliant, I believe."

"Very."

"Pray, were you acquainted with the parties in the late affair which has made so much noise?"

"What affair?" asked Claude.

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"The duel and the *poltroonerie* of this Mr. Wyndham."

"Yes, I know the parties."

"Then, sir, you can perhaps give me some information upon a subject which is so generally talked of in all circles. Elkington, they say, castigated Wyndham, who dared not take up the quarrel, and who had been caught cheating at cards."

"I heard no such report," said Claude, quietly, but shocked to find how little justice he could expect from common fame.

"There was a dreadful fracas. Lord Elkington caught Wyndham with marked cards, and horsewhipped him."

"No, no," said another gentleman, standing near, "it wasn't cheating at cards, but the fellow was impertinent to a young countess whom Lord Elkington has come over here to marry, and Elkington challenged him. He was a great coward, as any one must be, sir, you know, to offer a rudeness to a lady; and, finding no other means available, Elkington tweaked his nose, kicked him down stairs, and afterward horsewhipped him. Pray, sir, were you there?"

"I was."

"Did you witness the affair?"

"I did."

"Then do tell us something about it. They say this Mr. Wyndham took as sound a drubbing as possible, without the slightest resistance."

"Why, what a sneaking rascal!" said the first. "That Elkington is a fine fellow. He drives a splendid turn-out. I've often seen him in the Park. He's a capital fellow, and perfectly the gentleman."

"He must be," said the other. "I wish to goodness I had been there. It must have been very amusing. Pray tell us exactly how it was."

"Why, I fear I shall have to spoil your story," said Claude, smiling. "But, if you wish, I will state the circumstances as far as I can gather the truth."

"Do—pray do. I've been these several days running about trying to get an authentic statement. I do like to see these explosions in high life. They're capital. Do tell us—"

"Lord Elkington," said Claude, "attacked a gentleman who was from principle opposed to duelling, and who had openly and often declared his determination never to fight—"

"Well, that showed he was a coward at once," said the young man.

"To be sure it did," said the other. "For what reason could a man have for not fighting a duel but cowardice?"

"Certainly," said the other. "He must be a contemptible rascal."

"The gentleman had been guilty of no wrong," continued Claude, "but that of exposing a very dishonest trick of Elkington, and the latter gentleman struck him—"

"Struck him? Well, after that—he had to fight, then?"

"No, he declined; and, being of a peculiar mode of thinking on the subject of duelling, he rather preferred to bear even *a blow* than to deviate from what he thought the path of right—"

"Ab, bah!" rejoined the other. "You may depend, he is an infamous coward. A man who talks about 'principle,' and 'virtue,' and 'conscience,' and such trash when he is *struck*, you may be sure is a sneaking sort of fellow. What! take a blow? Why that's what no gentleman would do, sir, under any circumstance, right or wrong. If any one struck *me*, I would shoot him, and never after feel sorrow for it. I would—I would indeed. I would, sir, upon my honour. Wouldn't you, Bob?"

"Certainly would I," said Bob. "A man that would stand a blow would stand a kick—and a man that would stand a kick would stand having his nose tweaked—and a man that would stand having his nose

tweaked must be a blackguard, and can't be a gentleman—for what but cowardice *could* keep a man from fighting when he had been *struck* and had his nose tweaked?"

"Ah, there's the question. I agree with you exactly."

Claude moved a little away. There were a number of ladies and gentlemen standing around. Some of them he knew. They bowed to him coolly, and regarded him with curiosity. Once he heard a lady whisper to a young companion, "There, that's he!" and another lady touched her friend's shoulder, and whispered, "The person that was horsewhipped the other night by Lord Elkington."

And several lovely faces were turned towards him with curiosity and derision.

As he stood, some time after, with his back turned to a group of young ladies, he heard them talking of the affair, which he perceived had excited universal attention.

"Oh, good Lord!" said one, little aware that they were within hearing of the object of their remarks, "what a strange person he must be!"

"Oh, Dieu! If I were a gentleman, I would rather be killed!" said another.

"He will never be able to look any one in the face again," added a third.

"I was on the stairs the whole time," said another. "Papa had just called us down; and we were stopped by the crowd, and then I stood and saw it all."

"Oh, I wish I had seen it; it must have been very interesting."

"Oh, yes, it was, very, I assure you. Lord Elkington is so brave. He went up to Mr. Wyndham, and called him all sorts of names. Why, if he had done so to *me*, I couldn't have helped boxing his ears to save my life. He said he was a rascal—a coward—and all sorts of things."

"And what did Mr. Wyndham do then? Didn't he draw his sword?"

"No, poor man; he was so extremely afraid, he didn't say a word."

"Ah, poor fellow!" cried the rest.

And here was a general laugh.

"Well, that is exceedingly funny. Pray go on."

"Then Mr. Wyndham said he couldn't fight a duel, and Lord Elkington walked up to him and struck him. I screamed right out. I thought I should have died with fright."

"Well, what then? I wish I had been there. It must have been so exceedingly interesting."

"Oh, it was, I assure you. It was as good as a play."

"Go on—go on."

"Well, then, after he had struck Mr. Wyndham, and kicked him about a little, till he was out of breath, poor Mr. Denham ran up, and called Lord Elkington a villain, and then Elkington struck him too; and Mr. Wyndham stood by all the time, and never said a word."

"The horrid wretch!"

"Then poor Mr. Denham half drew his sword. He was just going to kill Elkington, and I was just going to faint, when out jumped little old General Le Beau, and Mr. Denham went away. And the next morning he was shot dead."

"And Mr. Wyndham never did anything about it?"

"Never. Only think how horrid!"

"Didn't shoot him?"

"No."

"Isn't it ridiculous? What a pity Mr. Wyndham is such a coward?—he is such a handsome fellow."

"Oh, I never could endure him."

"How can you say so, Emily? He is the most beautiful young man I ever saw; so tall—so noble—oh, Heaven! what a pity he's such a coward."

"Dear me," said the first, "look behind you."

There was a moment of deep silence, and then they all tripped away to another place, with a very unsuccessful attempt to suppress their laughter.

Claude quietly kept his position. Presently a group

of young men came by. He knew them all. Like everybody else, they were talking of him.

"Well, I say," said one, "no gentleman, whatever may be his principles, has a *right* to go in the face of society. If he's right, we're wrong. It's as much as to say we're ruffians."

"Certainly!" said another.

"I don't think so," said a third. "I find something noble in a man's adhering to his principles, whatever they are. They say any religion is better than none; and I say any principles are better than none."

"Ah, bah!" cried a gruff voice, "it's all stuff; the fellow's a coward, and takes this method to conceal it. I've no respect for a man who will not fight. He's a coward—and a *blow*, too! ah, bah!"

"Oh, don't talk to me of principle. No one can be a gentleman—"

"Yes, who can stand a blow?" demanded another.

"Sir Walter Raleigh had a fellow spit in his face, and he did not return it," said the advocate of Claude, though rather feebly.

"Very well for Sir Walter Raleigh—" said the other.

"But why, *why*," said the voice of Laval, who now spoke up for the first time, "why is that magnanimous in Sir Walter Raleigh which is the reverse in Wyndham? I find him a noble fellow. In my opinion—no offence to any one—he is the bravest man I ever saw, and a man of high character and superior genius. I never saw anything so splendidly done as the manner he took the blow. I saw he did not *really* believe that Elkington would go so far after what he had said. He started aghast—and I thought he would have torn him limb from limb. Elkington was no coward, but he quailed himself before Wyndham's eye. I believe he *would* have killed him on the first impulse had he not been held. Talk of that man's being afraid, indeed! How calmly—how nobly—how beautifully his mind has quieted, and put down the fiery passions in his breast. I love that man. He is too noble for

this age. I would rather have his friendship than that of any one's I ever saw !”

“ Well, well, perhaps so ; he did look like the devil when he caught it. I'll do him the justice to say that.”

“ You may depend upon it, messieurs, he's a very fine fellow,” said Lavalle.

“ Well, I don't think so,” exclaimed another. “ I think, after all his cant about principle and religion, a man who takes a *blow* is—must be a coward. A blow, you see, gentlemen, is a devilish serious thing. It's—a—a—d—d serious thing. It's, as one may say, the devil.”

“ So it is,” said another. “ I would take anything but a blow.”

“ Or a kick,” cried one.

“ Or a tweak by the nose,” said another.

“ These are insults which *ought* to be paid for with blood.”

“ That is the creed among gentlemen,” said another.

“ But,” said Lavalle, “ these things depend upon one's character and mode of thinking. Honour is in the mind, and the disgrace of a blow is conditional. If one receives it passively because one is *afraid* to resent it, then certainly a blow is a disgrace of the last extremity ; but if one receives it, and refuses to seek the ordinary redress from a pure principle, because he believes that an intellectual man and a Christian ought to suffer any outward indignity rather than violate the *law of God*, I say that man is a character of the noblest order ; and, just in the proportion in which he shocks the prejudices of mankind, and exposes himself to ridicule, misinterpretation, and odium, just in that proportion his abstaining from the vulgar mode of vengeance is grand and brave ; and, since we are created in the image of our Maker, it should be our object to think and act like him.”

There was a silence of a few moments ; Claude had already wished to escape the impropriety of listening, but he was confined within a narrow compass

by the crowd and the troops, and it was impossible for him to avoid it.

The conversation was resumed by Thomson, who said,

"In my opinion, Mr. Wyndham is a good-for-nothing fellow."

"Yes, he's a fool," said a gruff voice; "even if he's not a coward, he is a fool for putting himself in a position so awkward and equivocal. I am no coward neither," continued the gruff voice. "Egad, I'm not afraid of either Elkington or the world; *but*, from mere motives of policy, I wouldn't draw the eyes of all mankind on me—as the moral person who was kicked—as the religious gentleman who was knocked down—as the man of principle who got his nose tweaked."

There was here a general laugh.

"Now suppose I were as much of a wag as I chose to be, and wanted some sport! Why, what would I do, you see? Why, the first time I saw my moral gentleman in a coffee house, I'd walk me up to him, with a 'Good-evening to you, sir,' and give him a kick. I'd then take an ice or two, and, before I took my leave, what would I do? Why, just walk me up to him again, and fetch his nose a tweak, with, 'Adieu, monsieur, au revoir!' Well, what's he to do to this? Nothing; he can't fight—he won't strike. Egad, every mischievous schoolboy might give him a kicking on their way to school—every garçon at a restaurant's might cuff his ears—there's no living with such principles."

"That's very true," said Thomson.

"If we were in Heaven—ah!—why, very well; but we aint."

"No, certainly not," said Thomson.

"Nor likely to be—some of us!" said Lavallo.

"No," said Thomson; and here again there was a general laugh.

"Well, I'll answer to that," said Lavallo, "that the wag who should strike a man wantonly, merely because he was secure against retaliation, and that man

one who refrained from taking personal vengeance out of respect to the laws, society, and religion, would be a scoundrel so despicable, that I, for one, would not associate with him, nor frequent the company he keeps. Against such a person the laws would interfere, and probably he would find himself in a prison before long. I begin to think with Wyndham, that men who grope about for ages in darkness, till some superior being shows the way out of it, only want a few resolute persons of undoubted courage and honour to *set their faces against duelling*, and to surrender to the laws the charge of punishing personal assaults as well as all kinds of insults, to render duelling unfashionable and boxing vulgar. What a world of misery would then be saved to society—what widows' and orphans' tears and groans!"

"But society would become a pack of fellows without chivalry, without honour, and men would spit in each other's faces with impunity."

"No. Where, among the leaders of society, and particularly among *women*, the duellist was looked upon as the *thief* now is, and he who had even dared—stirred on by his vulgar and blind passions—to desecrate God's holy image with a blow, would be considered as base as the destroyer of female innocence, or the blasphemer of God himself; then, instead of brute force, mechanical steadiness of hand and practice of the eye—instead of vile, indiscriminating vengeance and beastly fury, all the differences of men would be referred to tribunals, and the inevitable evils which might be detected in such a state of things would be only incidental to mortal affairs—"

"But such unresenting men would be trampled on by some one."

"No. Who strikes a woman?"

"Ah, but that's a different thing—that's disgraceful."

"But why? Because it is the custom—because she does not fight."

"But would you make women of us all?" said the gruff voice.

"If you must be either women or brutes, yes," said Lavalle, quickly.

The booming cannon, which had for some time been heard at times and in the distance, now approached and shook the air at shorter intervals, and the besiegers advancing, directed a heavy fire against the part of the walls where Claude stood. It was immediately returned; and cannon, musketry, bombs, and all the dreadful machinery of war filled the air with fire and smoke, and caused the earth to tremble. The tumult and roar became at once so general as to cut short all conversation.

In the confusion which reigned everywhere, he was several times in contact with his old acquaintances, of whom some were affable as usual, but by far the greater part were cold, and many pretended not to recognise him in the least. Among them he saw the Carolans. None of their party perceived him but Ida. Her eyes met his a moment as he passed. They were full of gravity and sadness, but he made no attempt to offer her any token of recognition, but followed the example she had set, and they parted thus coldly and in silence. A short time afterward he found himself nearly alone. The crowd of soldiers had been repulsed by the assailants, who had gained an entrance in the fort, but had succeeded in rallying, and were driving them back in their turn. Claude did not follow them. His heavy heart took no share in this animated and beautiful spectacle, which presented a perfect counterpart of a fierce battle, every spot being crowded with combatants, and even the very windows and house-tops pouring forth their sheets of fire and smoke; whose heavy masses, rolling slowly through the air, rendered the striking scene only dimly visible here and there. He leaned against a post which had been lifted at some distance from the present scene of action, which was nearly hidden from him by the volumes of smoke; and he was conscious of the wish, that, instead of a mock battle, the wild uproar raging around was a real conflict.

“Perhaps, then,” he thought, “some ball might end a life which seems doomed to humiliation and sorrow, or at least I should have an opportunity, by mingling in its dangers, to forget the events that are pressing me into the dust.”

It was one of those thoughts which sometimes come across the most sensible mind in a moment of idleness and despondency. As if for affording him an opportunity to test its sincerity, a whizzing sound in the air caught his ear, and, at the same instant, a sharp shock struck the post within a few feet of his head. On examining it, with surprise he perceived that a bullet had lodged in it. Greatly startled at an occurrence which he concluded to be purely accidental, he sprang back, without any remnant of the desire which had just been so inopportunately realized; but that the shot was not the result of chance was immediately made manifest, for another ball whizzed by his ear, and struck a large stone on the bank beside which he was standing. Appalled with a mysterious horror, he looked in the direction from which this dark attempt had proceeded. Through the smoke he could just see a line of houses, the outskirts of the old town within the walls, from the upper windows of each of which the troops were pouring a rapid discharge of musketry, although not in the direction in which he was standing.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was night when Claude reached his hotel—amid all his troubles, happy in the consciousness that they were incurred without wrong on his own part, and delighted with the happiness he had been the means of communicating to the poor old lady, and the acquittal which he had caused to the innocent stranger.

"There is a pretty company waiting for you up stairs," said the waiter who had presented the bill.

"A pretty company?"

"Oui, monsieur. Very pretty. Keh! don't be impatient. They be not run away."

At a loss to conceive to what this impertinence referred, he mounted to his room. In the little ante-chamber sat three persons, of whom one was a youth dressed in a very pretending way. The other was a plain-looking man; the third an athletic person of forty. His uncommon stature, brawny hands, and broad shoulders gave token of great muscular strength. Each had a bill in his hand, and each stepped up to him at once and handed their accounts. They were messengers from a tailor, a livery-stable keeper, and a barber. The latter was he whose toilet had at first made upon him the impression of a young nobleman, with his long mustache, his carefully dressed hair, his elegant clothes, the whiteness and delicacy of his hands, and the general imitation of a person of rank. His bill was for soap, perfumes, brushes, honing razors, cutting hair, and numerous other matters. It amounted to 20 thalers. The coach bill, and that for keeping the saddle-horse, amounted to the more serious sum of 100 thalers; while the tailor held out a "rechnung," at the bottom of which a total of 290 thalers stared him in the face. Perhaps few novel-writers could subject their hero to a crisis so unromantic, but they could scarcely lead him into one more disagreeable. Haunted castles, blood-stained floors, and gliding spectres, with all the paraphernalia of Mrs. Radcliffe's or Maturin's stories, would have been more tolerable to Claude than these three bills of paper at the present moment. The idea of being in debt mastered his fortitude. It was precisely the thing for which the consciousness of virtue offered no consolation, and wisdom and philosophy no remedy. He could neither advance, stand still, nor retreat. He could neither tell the truth nor remain silent; and the intruders, who had thus early come,

like ominous seabirds before a storm, to give him a melancholy foretaste of poverty, were not long in discovering his confusion; and their manners changed at once from their usual exuberant respect to mingled astonishment and insolence. There are few men who look upon a *debtor* but as in some degree their property. Pecuniary responsibility generally breaks all ties—absolves from all courtesy—raises the creditor to the eminence of a despot, and often inspires him with the desire of exercising the arbitrary power of one. The helpless debtor must be suspected, accused, insulted in silence. The attacks of others are unsupported by self-approbation and the natural independence of a *man*. He is a slave, chained to be spit upon by the angry and laughed at by the unfeeling; and his own heart, alas! joins his enemies, and pleads against him.

“You must come in next day after to-morrow,” said Claude.

“Ah, keh!” said the barber. “Diable, monsieur! Do you believe I have nothing to do but run after—after—non, monsieur!”

“You are going to quit Berlin,” said the groom.

“No, upon my honour.”

“Ah, keh! honour!—diable!—when you don’t pay your debts!” said the barber, putting on his hat, knocking it down over his eyes, and thrusting his hands into his trousers pockets.

“I assure you,” said Claude, quietly, “I do not mean to leave Berlin.”

“That’s a lie, monsieur,” said the groom. “Your passport has been stopped, or you would have been off before now.”

Claude stepped towards the last speaker, and was going to put him out of the room, when he reflected that the man knew no better, and that, alas! he had some cause to think as he spoke. He paused, with a shame and incertitude which the debtor must often feel.

“You are a very impudent fellow,” said he.

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“Eh, bah!” said the barber; “a pretty gentleman! —awh—honour! ha! ha! ha! Voila! monsieur. There’s my bill; I don’t stir till it’s paid.”

The tailor’s man now stepped up.

“Mr. Wyndham, can you give *me* the money or any security?”

“No.”

“Well, sir, you are a—swindler, sir! and, if I had you in a field, I’d give you the soundest drubbing you ever had in your life. Mind, sir, I warn you, the first time I meet you in the street, I’ll—a gentleman, indeed! —an adventurer! I’ve half a mind—”

The man shook his huge fist so near his face that it touched his nose.

There are few men who could avoid plunging into a brawl upon such provocation, and fewer novelists who would have the hardihood, in spite of the prejudices of the age, to represent a patient sufferer of such opprobrious terms and insulting actions. But Claude’s mind was high, calm, and reflective; and it is one of the blessings of great sacrifices that they render minor ones more easy. Claude, who had borne *a blow* from the hand of a *gentleman*, under the most aggravated circumstances which could attend such a humiliating infliction, saw nothing to drive him from his balance in the brutality of uneducated and coarse men, in the exercise of what they deemed their duty, and who would have been much better pleased with him had he been imprudent enough to put himself on a level with them by commencing a collision. He said, therefore, without passion,

“My good friends, I owe you money. I am unable to pay you at present, in consequence of a misfortune. You have your remedy, if you think it worth adopting. I shall not leave Berlin, and—you must take your course.”

His calmness appeared to puzzle the men, and even to abate the indignation of all, except the barber. So true it is that a mild word turneth away wrath.

"You must be aware, monsieur," said the tailor, "that 290 thalers is a large sum to lose for a poor, hard-working man like me—with a large family, too."

"Indeed," said Claude, "I will do all in my power to prevent your losing it. I shall not leave Berlin—be assured I shall not; and you should remember that, in using the language of insult towards me, you are condemning me before you know whether I deserve it."

"Eh, keh! diable!" said the barber; "*laissez nous!*"

"Have you any prospect of ever paying me?" asked the tailor.

"No, frankly," said Claude, "in money; I have not, at least, any certain prospect. I am totally ruined; but I shall do my best to prevent any one's losing; and, moreover, the greater part of the clothes you have made for me are in that wardrobe; you may take them if you will, this moment."

The man seemed as much surprised by the beginning as by the end of this reply. He answered with greater respect,

"Well, I will take the clothes."

"It is but just you should," said Claude.

And, opening the wardrobe, he laid out the whole contents of his wardrobe, much of which was scarcely worn, besides the court suit, which our poor fortune-hunted traveller did not see thus pass away without a sigh over the brilliant associations—the royal halls—the midnight suppers—the delightful dinners—and the hours spent in company of one he was now, perhaps, never to see again, which it conjured up.

The man swung them on his shoulders, and with an awkward bow went away.

Claude then sat down and wrote an order for the horse.

"For you," said he to the groom, "you can take your master this. It is my authority to sell the horse, and indemnify himself, as far as possible, for the loss I have occasioned him."

The man took it and also went away.

"Et moi, monsieur!" said the barber, folding his arms insolently, and standing close to Claude with his feet a yard apart.

"There is your money," said Claude; "write me a receipt."

The man did so. The money was, by a curious chance, the very last groschen he had in the world. There was even a penning—the smallest coin—deficient.

"Monsieur, there is wanting a penning," said the man.

"I have no more."

"I can change a bill," said the barber.

"I have no bill," said Claude.

"Eh! keh!" said the little dandy. "It appears, monsieur, that I am just in time. Ha! ha! ha! parbleu! Au revoir, mon cher!"

"Well, now I am at the worst."

But he was not at the worst. Poverty never is; low as it may be, there is always a chosen step lower in humiliation and misery. It is at the worst only in the grave.

"Ah, Ida!" thought he, "little do you dream, amid your stately grandeur—"

His reflection was cut short.

The door opened without a knock, and a stranger entered. He had under his arm a large package of papers. He was followed by a second—a polite little man, plainly dressed; behind him stood two more—stout, rough, grave-looking fellows, each with a large club; and in the shadow of the corridor, half seen, stood yet a fifth, whose stature and proportion were greater than those of his companions, and who also leaned silently upon a heavy cane. Claude started at this apparition.

"I beg your pardon," said the first. "I have come to arrest you, at the suit of Count Carolan, for £50."

"It is not possible!" said Claude.

"I am very sorry—it is a most painful duty—but it is a duty, and my instructions are—positive."

"There must be some mistake," said Claude.
 "Certainly Count Carolan would not—could not—"

"I beg your pardon—I received his commands in person," said the polite man. "I am his lawyer. I hope you will excuse us; but you know, my dear sir, our profession has its unpleasant features—and in this we are but the mere instruments of another."

"And where must I go?"

"To the debtor's jail in — street."

"Why, I have been told *that* is the receptacle for the refuse of the town," said Claude, drawing back with considerable alarm. "There is a more respectable prison?"

"Unfortunately, that is full."

"But there is a mode," said Claude, "by which I may be arrested differently—by which I may be guarded in a separate room."

"These are privileges reserved only for people of a certain standing in society."

"But—I—" said Claude, "my position—I was assured—my claim to belong to that class—"

"So we thought," said the lawyer; "but Count Carolan refused to listen to it. He said you did not belong to that class, and had no claim to the privileges of *une personne distinguée*."

"I am ready," said Claude.

"Will monsieur like me to call a *droskey*?" said one of the men.

"Yes, certainly—no," said Claude, remembering he was penniless.

The sturdy bailiffs, shouldering their clubs, surrounded him, and he passed into the street. As he left the door of his hotel a splendid equipage drove by, the coachman and two chasseurs in the richest livery. He recognised the carriage of Carolan. The count himself was in it, with Ida. He caught a rapid glance at her face as they dashed by. They were probably going to a ball. Perhaps it might have been from the

light of the street-lamps, but the face of Ida appeared sad and pale.

“Go on, fair and sweet girl,” thought Claude; “thou to the bright haunts of pride and pleasure—I to prison and despair.”

He went on his way to the prison, envying the meanest of the careless crowd about him, who, whatever were their privations, had at least their freedom. He passed by many a gay-lighted shop, full of people—many a *café*, where young officers and *élégans* were sipping their cream or coffee. He passed the theatre—its windows lighted—and the armed horseman stationed in the middle of the street before the door, guarding the votaries of pleasure from any interruption. Some of the passengers were hastening by, humming; the little boys, as if prisons and miseries had no existence, were shouting in their careless sports; laughter and music met his ears; and the very barking of the dog had in it something careless, something free, which contrasted mournfully with his situation. Once a sudden melody from a band of wind instruments broke from a neighbouring street. Soft—plaintive—slow, it swelled upon the air till he passed close to the musicians, who retreated behind him, their sweet strains dying away like the last relic of happiness—and of the world. His way lay through the *Schloss*, that vast and gloomy pile, whose immense courts, towering walls, and heavy sculpture impressed the mind with a vague sense of horror and grandeur. A part of it was white in the moonlight, while its broad angles and massive buttresses threw the rest into black shadows. Often had he lingered amid these stately courts, touched with their huge and solemn character, and many an hour had fled away in their gorgeous apartments. The guards paced to and fro before the arches and along the balconies. Several domestics in the royal livery were passing formally across the broad and worn pavement. A carriage, easily distinguishable as that of one of the royal family, was drawn up at the

foot of a broad flight of stone stairs. So susceptible was Claude to picturesque beauty in the common scenes of life, that he paused to gaze with a kind of pleasant awe at these high-towering walls, crowned with statues, and their dark irregular summits marked along the sky—and the stars—the moon—the all that was visible above through the few filmy clouds, drifting with a soft, silent motion, apparently close along the high roofs. He forgot that he was a captive as his eye measured these lofty walls.

“Allons, monsieur, allons,” said one of the men, touching his shoulder slightly with his extended fingers, “we have no time to lose.”

And he proceeded on his course, without again looking around or above till he reached the prison.

The building was a large, dark-looking edifice of great extent. The windows were in the shadow, but the grated bars were distinguishable, and their lower parts were strongly boarded up. One look around at the broad square, of which this receptacle formed the prominent feature—at the shoreless, tranquil, ever-bright heavens—and the door was opened with a clanking noise of chains and bolts, was shut again with the same ominous sounds, and he was within the walls of a jail. His reflections on entering it were not rendered less gloomy by the consciousness that he was there for a just debt, which he scarcely believed it would ever be in his power to pay. His conductors led him, with a sinking heart, into a low, smoked room, dimly lighted by a tallow candle. There were some white pine-board furniture, consisting of desks, dirty engravings, &c. Here they demanded his money. He had none. They required to search him. He submitted. The man exchanged a few trivial remarks upon matters in no way connected with him, and had one or two jokes about something which had happened during the day, and at which they laughed heartily. In the midst of these a new face appeared with a large key. It was that of his jailer. He was an athletic man with a good-humoured countenance.

“Bon soir, monsieur,” said he. “Allons, you must come with me.”

He led the way up one flight of naked, desolate stairs; long, dismal corridors stretched from the landing-place on either hand. They mounted yet another flight. Things here looked even more dismal. The air was close and fetid, and impregnated with sickening odours, among which the fumes of bad tobacco were pre-eminent. He followed his new master—as a felon—to a door, from which he withdrew the bolts, and which he then unlocked. The massive key turned twice with a clanking spring ere the last barrier between poverty and the happy world was passed, and Claude found himself in a filthy and extremely bad-smelling apartment, crowded with unhappy wretches, the smoke of a just extinguished candle filling his throat and nostrils. A dozen common straw beds lay on the floor, each belonging to a prisoner. It was eleven at night. The men, although they had evidently been up—and Claude detected near the candle the end of a pack of dirty cards thrust hastily beneath some clothes—made a great parade of rising and putting on their clothes. One said, “Light the candle;” another, “Where’s the phosphorus?” and presently their candle was again lighted and their garments put on.

“Good. Here you are at last!” said the jailer, with a benevolent smile; and then withdrawing, he closed the door and doubly locked it, the whole company shaking their fingers at him, with many expressions of derision or rage, as he disappeared. All was now curiosity among the prisoners. They gathered around the new-comer with a freedom and a familiarity which he knew not how to avoid as little as to endure. His tall, noble form—his air of good-breeding and affluence—the elegance of his dress, created as great a sensation as that produced by Gulliver when found by the Lilliputians. At length one of them came up to him, and asked, with marks of curiosity,

"Are you here for *debt*?"

"Yes."

"Have you got any money?" demanded another.

"No."

"But how are you arrested at this time of night?"

"That's not legal," said a second.

"No, indeed," rejoined a third.

And then they drew up together in a corner, and held a kind of council of war, canvassing the cruelty and illegality of such a measure, and declaring that he would be "out to-morrow." In the mean time, one took his hat and another his gloves. One offered to make tea—another proposed coffee; and, notwithstanding his attempts to withdraw himself from such friendly obligations, one of his companions had a spirit-lamp lighted, and by the aid of some hot water, and in an old, broken, dirty teapot, with three or four leaves of bad tea, boiled for ten minutes, he presently produced what he was pleased to offer as "a good, strong cup of tea."

Claude took it and attempted to drink. It seemed a type of his bitter and mean destiny, and he felt that he could not too soon begin to accustom himself to the loathsome draught. Besides, he was reluctant to offend the unhappy beings who, however rude and different from the polished companions of his past hours, seemed, at least kind in their intentions. They were coarse, vulgar, and repulsive, but alas! they were all the friends he had left. A vacant bed of straw was pointed out to him as that he was to occupy. Before they retired he found great differences in their character. One was a dissolute knave in every word and action, and he was the most familiar with him. Another was really kind, and comparatively disinterested. The rascal (who one of them whispered had once before been in another prison for robbery) approached him, and joined him as he walked up and down the narrow floor. He told him, in a few words, how the prisoners lived. "They had two meals a day, handed up in large

pails. The coarsest, cheapest food which could support life. They had one hour a day to exercise in a kind of court a few yards square, itself full of putrid odours. The light was to be put out every night at ten. All friends coming to visit them were to pay at the door two and a half groschen. Some of the prisoners were here for fifteen cents; and whoever remained *a year*, had the right to go out at the end of that period, and could not again be confined for the same debt."

"Now I," said the man, "have come here of my own accord. They dunned me to death at home; so I've come here to spend my year like a gentleman, and then—keh! I'm free as the best of 'em. Pooh! don't be down-hearted, my buck! it's nothing when you are once a little used to it. We smoke—play cards—smuggle in our bottle of rum—and live like the king. Look here," said he, and he opened a kind of brown paper coffer full of pipes, cheese, black bread, bottles, tallow candles, tobacco, and half-smoked segars. "Here is some rum—take a drop—it'll make you sleep. They don't generally sleep the first two or three nights, but you'll soon get used to it. If you don't go out and in for two or three months, you won't feel it at all. I have been here now nine months. I'm quite sorry I'm getting through so fast. Come, cheer up!"

And he laid his hand somewhat facetiously on Claude's shoulder.

He shook it off, not from anger so much as a repugnance, which he was not aware he had expressed so clearly.

"Ah! you're particular in your acquaintance, maybe. Well, that's all very well; but beggars shouldn't be choosers. A gentleman as can't pay his debts oughtn't to carry his head quite so high—no offence, I hope, sir."

CHAPTER XVII.

CLAUDE walked the room till morning, grasping at a thousand expedients to extricate himself from his disagreeable dilemma. The *idea* of imprisonment has a moral effect upon the mind which no one can conceive who has not experienced it. The circumstances of his own confinement, too, were peculiarly painful. Had he been thrown into a dungeon for a crime of which he was innocent, he could much better have supported the misfortune than he now found himself able to do the consciousness that he was imprisoned for a cause held by all mankind to be a good and sufficient one. He racked his brain for some means of paying Carolan, whose cruel conduct sunk deeply into his heart as he contrasted the dark, dirty walls—the miserable, dilapidated room and furniture—the greasy and ragged beings who were his companions, with the brilliant circle and magnificent halls, in the midst of which his oppressor was probably moving at that instant. He did not feel indignation or a desire of vengeance so much as he felt surprise and wonder, that one in Carolan's position could be so deaf to the dictates of common humanity and common decency as to crush so remorselessly into the earth—without examination or forbearance—one who, at least, was a fellow-being. Sad and dark were the thoughts with which he beguiled the hours of that long and sleepless night, walking the floor after all his fellow-lodgers were asleep. How strangely the scenes of the past year rose upon his memory! How varied and yet swift had been his course to his present condition! All those whom he had made acquaintance with—the young, the fair, the happy, the free—appeared to him. Ida—bright, radiant, gorgeous—as he had first

seen her—and pale and sad, as she had crossed him that night—was he beloved by that tender and beautiful being? Amid the scenes in which she moved, was her heart with him in this rude abode? Ah, yes; and for a moment the idea of her sympathy touched the rough walls with sweetness, and made the stained boards beneath his feet soft as a path of roses. Poor Denham's pale and bloody face here rose to him, startling his tender dreams with the ghostly visage of death—and the mysterious assassin, with his uplifted dagger—and Elkington—and *the blow*.

His frame was agitated, his blood heated and feverish; and human life seemed such a solemn and strange medley—such a mockery—that again dark ideas of self-destruction dashed across his mind, and he thought that in one moment he could end his gloomy and harrowing pains, and sleep—with poor Denham—where “poison nor fire” could touch him farther. It required all his habitual self-command to shake himself free from these excited thoughts. Nor would he, perhaps, have been able to do so but for *one reflection*, which is a support to the upright mind in the darkest hour of distress and peril. He had nothing to accuse himself of. He had not, at least knowingly, done wrong. Nay, more (for his principles were so fixed that they did not waver even while enduring the painful consequences of them), he had done right. He had sacrificed himself to his sense of duty. Thus far the results had been ruin and humiliation—a stained name—cooled friends—triumphant enemies. But he knew that, as in the game of whist, although bad play sometimes succeeds, and the observance of skill fails, these results are but accidental and temporary chances, and in no way alter the general value of fixed and wise rules of action.

One hope struck him: that by the aid of St. Hilaire—Lavallo—Digby—Kühl, etc., he might procure such a security against his departure from Berlin as would release him from the actual limits of a prison.

It was then his intention to boldly and openly abandon all pretensions to admission in the *société* to which he had been accustomed—to give lessons in English or French, for he was perfectly capable of both—to live with an economy as strict as health and decency would permit—and to toil with ardour till he could accumulate sufficient to discharge all the obligations he had contracted. Rossi, who depended on him, and poor Mrs. Denham, occurred to him; but the pang which he experienced on account of not being able to continue to them the assistance he had promised, he felt would be manly to bear with patience, and yet wiser to dismiss altogether from his mind. He repeated the line from our great poet, “What is done, is *done*,” and “Things without remedy should be without regard.” Wisdom, although flowing from the murderer’s lips. The pale morning broke upon his meditations.

As daylight dawned his companions arose. They looked, in the clearer beams of day, more repulsive and hideous. Their clothes were miserable—their persons filthy—their breath rank. Many wore no other article of dress than a large *robe de chambre* of greasy sheepskin, the wool turned next their skin. They had diseases, some of them—eyes sore and inflamed by debauchery—and noses red and carbuncled. These were the men who, in a general spirit of benevolence, he had wished to receive on some terms of equality. Now he shrunk from them with an aversion which he could neither conquer nor conceal. They were his fellow-creatures, with immortal souls like his own, but, thus fallen—by whatever cause—he found them loathsome and unendurable. Fearful decrees of Providence, which renders one unhappy mortal so far beneath another that nature revolts, and the sweet theories of humanity fall before their touch!

The breakfast was brought up at eight—a mass of greasy soup, which he could not eat.

“You have no money?” inquired the jailer, who perceived he did not eat.

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"None!"

"Ah, but you'll get nothing else. You must come to it at last."

"Perhaps the gentleman would like a roasted chicken and some Champagne!" said his rude acquaintance of the previous evening.

"Bring us a few strawberries and cream," cried a second.

"Will you take them with or without sugar?" asked the first; and there was a general grin.

The prospect of being without food was seriously alarming, and Claude begged paper, pens, and a messenger to carry a note.

"Where's your cash to pay for these things?" said the man.

"I am sure—that is, I hope—my friend will pay."

"Ah! so," said the man.

"And cannot I have a room to myself?"

"Keh! diable—no," said the man. "Is that a reasonable request? You're not in a hotel. Why you more than they?"

"The gentleman is of a thoughtful disposition, and fond of solitude," said his persecutor. "I myself should like an apartment looking out on a garden, with a balcony."

This facetiousness was received with a general laugh.

"Take my watch," said Claude, "and let me have a little money on it till I can see my friends."

The man shook his head.

On a greasy table, with broken legs, and polished by being used not a little as a seat, Claude wrote a letter to Digby, begging him to come and see him. The messenger took it, and soon returned. The gentleman was not at home, but Claude felt relieved. The idea of quitting the room and company in which he now found himself was his principal desire. It seemed that this alone would almost make him happy. Alas! how were his wishes narrowed since the time when he

dreamed of palaces—and equipages—and Ida hanging on his arm, a fond and happy wife! Every moment in his present position was almost insupportable. The rough humour, mixed with malice, of his enemy—for, although he had not been twelve hours in this den of common misery, he had (poor human nature!) already an enemy—had gained the rest to his side. His undisguisable repugnance to their familiarity, and his desire to escape from contact with them, were observed, and resented by nearly all; and they endeavoured to make his situation as uncomfortable as possible, as some meaner birds of prey might pick at Prometheus while chained and writhing under the beaks of his fierce vulture.

“Don’t mind ’em, sir,” said a wretched little hunchback. “They’re a rough set, and don’t know how to behave. Forgive them. They don’t know what they do.”

The words of our Saviour, unconsciously uttered by this ignorant creature! Claude held out his hand for his, and shook it heartily.

“My honest fellow, one day you and I shall be better acquainted, perhaps.”

His air and manner struck even those rude eyes, and for some time there was a cessation of hostilities.

In the mean time, where was Digby? Every time the door opened, he started. A hundred times his heart beat quick, as he thought he heard his friend’s step; but still he did not come. The day wore away. Night came. No reply from him. At ten, Claude, exhausted, lay down upon his couch, but he could not sleep. He fell sometimes into that dreadful state of dozing, when all the stings of reality seem sharpened, and the soul is given up to its horrors without the support of waking reason. He was oppressed with frightful dreams. He started often. Sometimes he thought himself falling off a precipice; sometimes the ghostly image of Denham glided over him, and once he woke screaming, with the dagger of his assassin

glimmering over him in the shadow, and in the act of piercing his heart. He thought now he should be obliged to remain a year in prison. What hope had he of relief? How could he ever pay his debts? A year with his present associates would cause him to contract foul diseases—would make him, perhaps, as unclean and gross as they! He rose again to escape from these dreadful apprehensions. His eyeballs burned, his head ached, and he found vermin crawling over him.

“Ah! Carolan,” he thought, “may Heaven forgive you. I fear I never can, ruthless—bitter oppressor! And this is the bland and polished man I met with so much pleasure—the smiling, elegant, hospitable, affluent leader of rank and fashion. How little do we know men from seeing them in society—from dining with them—from being with them in assemblies of pleasure! How few reflect, while they enjoy this person’s profuse hospitality and accept his courteous attentions, that, were they once beneath his grasp—were they once to offend his pride—they would be thrust, unpitied, into a loathsome dungeon—deprived of light, air, exercise, food—left to mourn—to die, perhaps, within these dismal walls, while music, and laughter, and the giddy dance are going on almost within sound of their groans; and when this man comes to die—as the richest, the greatest *must*—will no stern image of his victim frown pale and accusing by his bedside? Will he be called to no account for the pangs his jewelled hand has inflicted? for the misery which a word from his bland lips could have spared? Ah! cruel and thoughtless enemy. The ways of God are fearful, and you may one day feel with horror the bitterness which the captive drinks—the cruelty of trampling on the helpless!”

Morning again broke, and again the breakfast came. He took a cup and ate. His face was so pale and haggard, that, although his tormentor ventured a jest upon the recovery of his appetite, it was received in

silence by the circle of by-standers, who proceeded to light their pipes without paying him any more attention. The food, which had looked so loathsome, tasted better than he expected. It was clean, and not disagreeable.

“Besides,” thought he, “it is my fare. Hunger brings down pride, and misery learns to bow. Alas! it is a useful lesson.”

He now wrote a note to the English embassy, with the members of which he had a passing acquaintance. It was answered in an hour, by an order from the director of the prison to put him in a room by himself, and give him every attention compatible with his security; and his heart leaped within him in being shown into a cleaner room down stairs, fronting on the square. The lower half of the windows were boarded up, but there was a small hole in each one of them through which he could look into the street. There was also a bedstead and a bed, a wash-hand basin and water, a wooden chair, and a table with four legs. Moreover, he was here alone. His first moment of solitude in this new chamber was one of exquisite pleasure. The man said he had also procured 50 thalers on his watch and seals, which he held at his orders; and he agreed to send in better food from an adjoining restaurant. The good-humoured jailer seemed to sympathize with him in his delight, and said,

“You’ll be better here, won’t you? I’m glad they gave you this room.”

This expression of kindness touched Claude’s heart. He had scarcely been an hour alone when Digby came in. His face wore an expression of the deepest indignation which Claude had seen there yet, and there was also perceptible in his manner a certain roughness and want of respect very different from that he had usually adopted towards him.

“Well, how are you, Mr. Wyndham?” said he. “Sorry to see you here—a—a—these things will—
—happen; but you musn’t think yourself the only un-

fortunate—a—a—man in the world; I—I—also have my griefs.”

“What griefs?” said Claude, who, even in his misfortune, had a heart open to those of others.

“Mary—our Mary—the little—ungrateful—a—a—fool—has—a—a—eloped from us.”

“Great Heaven!” said Claude.

“Yes—and with that—a—” (he looked around as if to assure himself that his formidable foe could not hear him) “infamous—profligate Elkington. She left a note—to me—stating that ‘he had promised to marry her—that I must not be either alarmed or angry—that we should meet again in London—and that she should receive us as the Countess of Beverly.’”

“What incredible infatuation!” said Claude; “what black-hearted villany!”

“I think, moreover, that her mother was—a—a—privy to her flight, ‘sir; I—she—” he drew out his handkerchief, and wept a few moments in silence.

“Indeed, this pains as much as it surprises me,” said Claude.

“D—n them, let them go!” said Digby, rising in wrath; “she is no daughter of mine. I disinherit her—I disown her; and as for her mother—”

This intelligence greatly astonished Claude, and he sympathized deeply with the bereaved father.

“Let them go,” said Digby. “I shall never utter her name again. What did you want to see me for?” he demanded, abruptly.

“Ah, at this moment I cannot think of intruding my affairs upon you.”

“I’m very sorry for you, I’m sure,” said Digby; “but these things happen every day, and they must be borne. I was in jail once twenty-four hours myself. I did not mind it. It’s nothing, after all. Imagine yourself in a ship—or indisposed—or that it rains. It is the very same thing. You’ve an excellent room here. What’s the amount of your debt?”

“Fifty pounds!”

"Ah, fifty pounds! Bless me! a good round sum. How are you going to pay it? You have funds, I hope."

"No, not a cent."

"Ah—ah! that's bad! What are you going to do about it?"

Claude, although chilled by this cold and careless air, which he did not expect, related to him his plan to procure security and teach English.

"Ah—ah! security—for your appearance—hey? Yes—but whom have you fixed upon? You have a plenty of friends, I believe. I'll tell you who'd be your security in a minute—if you'd ask her; and I have no objection—for it sha'n't be said of me that I deserted a friend in distress—to see her privately *myself*. She'll plank the money in two seconds—I'm quite sure she will. I should not mind asking her right up and down—right out and out—that's the way to do business."

"Whom do you mean?"

"That young Countess Ida!"

Claude started.

"What, you won't?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh—ah! you'll think of it, perhaps. You'll take a different view of it when you have been here a week or so. Well, I've an engagement myself at present; my head's so battered with the thoughts of my poor Mary, that I scarcely know—a—a—I'm on my head or my heels. If I can do anything in the world for you, you may command me."

"Mr. Digby," said Claude, "I will be frank with you. I am here under extremely disagreeable circumstances, and I wish to be released on bail for my appearance. I intended to solicit this favour of *you*. It is but a nominal risk. I need not explain that you are liable for the debt only in case of my running away, which I hope you feel there's no danger of."

"What's the amount?" said Digby, turning very red.

“ Fifty pounds. If I get out I can make my living ; if I remain here, I really can't see how I am to do anything.”

“ Well, well, I'll think of it. I'll—see Mrs. Digby,” said Digby.

“ No,” said Claude, “ it is not requisite ; the service I ask of you is not one which requires consideration. Say yes or no, and relieve me from farther suspense. Will you deposite the money in court for my appearance ?”

“ Why we—you see—a—I—the fact is, my dear fellow, since we left London, the—a—a—times are hard—devilish hard. My agent writes me of very serious losses. Nothing on *earth* would give me greater pleasure than to oblige you ; but money, you know, is—a—a—money ; and I have long ago—a—a—made a resolution never to become security, under any circumstances, for—a—a—any man. Besides, I'm going back to London immediately ; and, in fact, I come to make my parting visit. I hope, with all my heart, you'll get out of your difficulty,” he continued, shaking very heartily the hand which Claude did not refuse ; “ I do, Wyndham, upon my soul I do. Any commands for London ?”

“ None.”

“ Well, adieu — good-by. God bless you ! My heart bleeds to see you here ;” and, very red in the face, Digby withdrew.

He was no sooner gone than several officers of the court came to prosecute the suit against him in behalf of Carolan. He had been arrested so abruptly in consequence of Carolan's complaint that he was about to elude the debt by flight. He confessed the amount at once, without defence or explanation. By this proceeding about a hundred thalers were added to the original sum.

Several more days passed in this way. No one came to see him. At length he was brought up to court to hear the judgment pronounced. He was ushered into

a neat, small room, where three gentlemen on the bench and two clerks, with two or three bailiffs and Count Carolan's lawyer, composed all the company. One of the judges had dined in company with him at Carolan's several times, and discovered a disposition to cultivate his acquaintance. This same person now regarded him with cool, quiet indifference, with which he would have looked upon any other prisoner. The sentence was read, and he was condemned to remain in prison till the debt was paid.

He was at once reconducted to his dreary dwelling; and, with a fainting soul, he felt, as the doors once more closed upon him, as if he were stepping into his grave.

A week more elapsed. No one visited him; and he was determined, after the unexpected rebuff received from Digby, not to solicit the attention of any other friend—not of St. Hillaire—not even of Lavalle. He borrowed a few books, but his money was rapidly gliding away, and he trembled to lay out a cent for anything but the actual necessities of life. He found he was obliged to pay two thalers a month for the bed; and every sheet of paper he used, and every message he sent, cost him something. His food was also expensive; and, although he denied himself all luxuries, he could not avoid spending comparatively a great deal. Here—abandoned—sad—hopeless—without occupation—without company—he learned the use of money. Every groschen he expended was first carefully considered. He had no soap, no napkins; his washing was obliged to be curtailed, and the luxury of clean linen to be surrendered. In four weeks he had altered in appearance. Accustomed to much air and exercise, the confinement debilitated him. His face grew thin and pale, and his spirits sad. He felt as if about to lose his health. Pains and aches came over him. He was pining for air—for the sight of men—of nature. He thought the world was a passed thing with him—a vanished dream. He thought he should

speedily step from his dismal abode into the last, and, perhaps, scarcely less cheerless refuge of the captive—the grave.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONE day, after he had been about two months in this situation, he heard, early in the morning, the tread of several clumsy feet on the stairs. There was a small aperture in his door filled with glass, through which the turnkey could look into his room at pleasure without coming in. On looking through this place, he saw four or five persons carrying down a rough pine-board coffin. Some one was dead. It struck upon his soul as a mournful presentiment. Alas! he too might soon be thus borne away by rude hands to a neglected grave—unmourned—unmissed. On inquiring, when his turnkey came in, who had died, he found it was his rough persecutor, who had come here voluntarily to live like a gentleman. Poor fellow! he felt glad he had made no return to his taunts.

“Did he suffer much?” asked Claude.

“No. It was all over in five hours after the first attack.”

“What was the matter with him?”

The man shook his head slowly, and went out without answering.

The next morning but one Claude was again disturbed by the same unusual sound of heavy feet at an early hour. He addressed himself once more to his little keyhole. It was another coffin, resting so weightily on the shoulders of its bearers as to leave no doubt of its contents.

A vague suspicion arose in his mind that some pestilence had broken out among the prisoners.

When his attendant came in again, he asked him if it were so.

"You've hit it," said the man, nodding his head in the affirmative.

"What is it?" asked Claude.

"A horrid thing. It strikes you like a bullet—racks you with cramps—turns you blue in the face—and pops you off in short order."

"Is it contagious?"

"Rather."

"Are there any sick with it now?"

"One. None that has caught it has survived. One of 'em is just a-going, I'm afraid; and the worst of it is, the doctors don't understand it, and no one'll go near this poor fellow for fear of catching it. It is the poor little hunchback, you know, that battled the other ones for being cross with you."

"And is he dying so, unattended?"

"Yes. What can one do? It's as good as death to go near him, and he is too ill to be removed to the hospital. I think the poor devil don't get his medicine half the time."

"May I go to him?"

"You?" said the man, with surprise.

"Yes. I will stay with him, if I can be permitted."

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes. You've a right to the room, and it will be very good of you; but—"

"Let me go, then, at once!"

He led the way as he spoke, and Claude again entered the room from which he had escaped with so much pleasure. It presented an appalling appearance. The invalid lay in a corner—livid, and apparently dying. The rest were withdrawn as far as possible. He was, as the man had said, too ill to be removed to the hospital; and they had not yet come to arrange what ought to be done with the others. Gloomy and haggard faces were around. The hardy mirth, which

sometimes flourishes in a prison, had disappeared. All was ominously silent.

On approaching the patient, Claude found him very low. His head lay in an uneasy position, the pillow having fallen aside. Claude shook and replaced it. A draught of a cooling nature was standing beyond his reach on the floor.

"Drink! drink! drink!" said the poor sufferer.

"It's death to go near him!" said one of the other prisoners, in a low voice.

Claude handed it to him according to the directions. He seemed refreshed by it, and turned his eyes gratefully upon his benefactor.

"I'm—most—gone!" he said, with a faint, difficult voice. "Half an hour more!"

"My good, kind friend, can I do anything for you?"

"Pray! pray!" said the poor fellow, pointing to a book.

Claude knelt, and read a prayer selected for the bed of the dying.

"I have—a *child*!" said the man, when he had done, with a stronger effort. "Take her that book! They will tell you down stairs—where—to find her. Say I blessed her—and you—God bless you. Oh! I am cold—"

He fell back.

Claude gazed upon his face for several minutes. A change came over it, but the spirit passed calmly. He closed the eyes.

"To a better world, poor friend!" said Claude. "I will do your bidding, and more, if in my power."

He thought the scarce parted spirit heard him as it left the body.

As he descended again to his own room, the poor fellows around bowed to him respectfully. Some of them blessed him. It was a simple tribute to goodness and courage, and he felt how much more brave as well as rational it was to turn even from the grossest insult with patience, and to risk life only in the cause of humanity and virtue.

In the afternoon the turnkey presented him a bill for dinners of five thalers, stating that he had no more cash on hand, and the restaurateur would supply no more till he was paid. The gross prison fare rose to his memory. He felt already his appetite failing. He was full of pains. He believed he should soon lose his health, and perhaps his life, if obliged to return to a diet so repulsive and so unlike that which habit had rendered necessary. He sat down and wrote to Count Carolan.

“MONSIEUR LE COMTE,

“I have been now in prison two months. I am ill—without money, without food—reduced to the common fare of the unhappy inmates of this mournful dwelling. I have to inform you, also, that a fatal pestilence has broken out in the building, and carried off three victims in two days. I request you, in the name of humanity, to release me. I offer you my word of honour not to leave Berlin without paying you. If your object is to get the money, you can never succeed by keeping me here. If your object is to humble my pride, it is humbled as far as a man's should be. If you desire my life—unless I can breathe the air and take a little exercise, your desire will speedily be gratified. My freedom—if you grant it—I shall employ in honourable labour, of which you shall have the first fruits. Believe me, sir, incapable of falsehood.

“I am, Monsieur le Comte,

“Your obedient servant,

“CLAUDE WYNDHAM.”

It was with the last two groschens he possessed in the world that he despatched the messenger with this note. He felt that in writing it he had not humiliated himself; for he considered Carolan a man whose weak understanding caused his present obduracy more than his bad heart. He had yet to learn how prosper-

ity and pride inflate and harden even the best heart, unless watched over by a sensible mind.

The messenger returned in an hour. Claude's heart beat and his hand actually trembled as he perceived that the man had brought an answer.

"You found Count Carolan at home, then?"

"Yes. He gives a great dinner to-day. His door was surrounded by carriages. Some of the princes were there, and all the diplomatic corps. They told me at first that he could not be troubled with this affair, but I would not go away without an answer. I was determined, sir."

Claude looked at the poor menial. There was kindness in his eye, and his face wore the expression of humanity and commiseration, which, through its rough and not over clean features, made it look even beautiful.

"Thank you," said he; "I am really greatly obliged to you."

"I don't know, sir, but I fear Count Carolan is a hard man when any one offends him. You are not the first he has kept here."

"Well, let us see," said Claude. "He can but refuse." The letter ran thus :

"SIR,

"I have committed the account against you to my lawyer, who has already received his instructions, and I cannot interfere with what now belongs entirely to him.

"Yours, etc.,

"CAROLAN."

The paper was a thick, gold-edged English sheet. It exhaled a perfume of roses, the wax was sprinkled with gold, and the impression of the seal was the finely-cut arms of the family.

"Well!" said Claude, "I thought so. I—I—" He bent his head upon the table. Long confine-

ment had made him nervous and hysterical. He did not shed a tear, but he grew pale and cold as the thought of the wide streets—the moving crowds—the fresh, sunshiny air—the deep, cool woods—the sky—the streams—and all the bright outward world, passed like a vivid panorama through his imagination.

The man had gone out and closed the door softly. The poor fellow did not wish to disturb him; and the delicacy and refinement of this lowly heart—almost as much immured here as himself—touched him, and drew the tear which had not flowed at the thought of his own disappointment.

At this instant there was a sudden rush against the door, and a loud knocking. It was opened, and Lavallo stood before him.

“My friend, my beloved friend!” cried he, and they leaped into each other’s arms as if they had been brothers.

“I thought—” cried Claude, “I was *sure* something had kept you.”

“I have been in France,” said Lavallo. “To-day is the first time I have heard of it. I have scarcely touched the ground in coming. I overturned a fellow at the door, and expect nothing else than to be put in here with you for assault and battery.”

“Who told you?” asked Claude, lifting his face.

“Ah, that shall be for another time; but, Dieu! how you are altered! You are scarcely recognisable;” and he gazed at his always handsome face, but which now, by confinement and reflection, had acquired a delicacy, a transparency, and an expression of intellect and refinement rarely seen in a countenance at the same time so firm and manly. He had never before, indeed, remarked how extremely handsome Claude was. His features were so finely formed—his brows pencilled so definitely—his eyes so large and full of soul—and his mouth cut as if by the hand of a sculptor, all showing through a complexion which might have been envied by a woman. Lavallo com-

prehended, as he gazed on his friend, better than ever, the impression which he suspected he had made on the heart of Ida.

"The debt—" said Lavalle. "What is it?"

"Fifty pounds."

"And you have been here so long for such a sum? Pay it!—pay it ten times over!"

"Generous friend!" said Claude. "But do not be offended. You must do me a much greater favour than what you propose."

"I swear to grant it, whatever it is," said Lavalle.

"You must *not* pay this debt. I have abased myself before Carolan. I must make him feel his wrong."

"What! vengeance from you? Have you grown wicked in your dungeon?"

"No. The vengeance I ask is to be permitted to toil for and pay this *myself*. You shall get me out by depositing the amount in court as a security for my appearance. You are not afraid I shall run away?"

"I'm afraid you *won't!*" said Lavalle.

"Carolan must feel the cruelty, the—"

"Stop," said Lavalle; "he has more excuse than you think. He regards you as the greatest obstacle to his wishes in existence. I have heard a *foule* of things since my arrival. You know Ida and I are cousins by the mothers. I have always been as a brother. As for *love*, she knows my views lie elsewhere. The day of the duel, Elkington pressed her to accompany his mother to London, so that on his arrival there, at the proper time, their union might at length take place. Well, what did she reply? She dismissed him with bitter contempt and horror—for ever; she declared his principles were as repulsive to her as his person—that the hand stained with the blood of a duel should never touch hers in friendship again—and she did, somehow or other, come out with the interesting avowal, that you—from the attempts to humiliate you—had risen superior to all your enemies. No one dreamed the little devil had so much spirit; and she sent Elkington

spinning off, in a greater rage than he will get over in a year. So, in revenge, he has carried away with him that rosy-lipped Mary Digby. This fact has confirmed the evil opinion of him which every one already began to entertain, and has so completely convinced a certain lovely young countess that your reported marriage with her was all a fabrication of Elkington, that—but this is, of course, all jest. However, it was she who told me of your situation, and in a way which—why, I'm worse at keeping a secret than a woman!"

"Lavalle, spare me!" said Claude. "If you mean to intimate that I am honoured with the esteem of this young girl, I will merit it by my conduct. Never will I approach her. I have had a humiliating lesson. My firmest prayer is, that we may never meet again. But for this debt, I would leave Berlin to-night."

"Do as you please; but what means are you going to take to *earn*, as you call it, this money? You can't plough or cut wood, can you?"

"I can teach English," said Claude.

"You?"

"Even I."

"You—the elegant—the flattered—the admired Claude Wyndham—"

"Dear Lavalle, your spirits run away with you. Remember I am weak and sad, or, at least, I have been so so long, that even joy is a pain. When shall I be out? I sigh for one breath of sweet, fresh air!" and, in truth, he heaved a deep-drawn sigh.

"I shall drive at once to my banker's—to the lawyer's—to the court. If it *can* be done to-day, it shall. I'm off this very instant—"

"But, Lavalle—I am ashamed to tell you—I am actually without food. You have come in time. I am down to my last penning. I have eaten nothing to-day!"

"Trust to me," said Lavalle, tears springing into his eyes. "Trust all to me;" and he dashed off as hastily as he had entered.

As Claude looked around upon the naked walls, every crack of which he knew, every web of which he had watched for hours and weeks, he almost feared the last scene had been a dream, so bright, dazzling, and even painful was the sudden prospect of freedom.

In half an hour, two waiters, aproned, and bearing an ample and very odoriferous dinner, entered. There was everything that could tempt his palate: two or three kinds of choice wines—segars—silver covers—clean tablecloths and napkins. The table was spread as if for a lord. The waiters desired to know whether they should withdraw, and, upon receiving his answer, they retired. Such a meal is as full of consolation for troubles that are past, as of firm resolutions against future evils. As he was commencing it, the commissioner looked in for something. Claude made him sit down with him and share the welcome feast. The honest fellow ate as he had never eaten before; the delicate viands disappeared with marvellous quickness, and the sparkling Champagne was disposed of without useless ceremonies or unnecessary delay. At the request of Claude, the remains of the feast—and they were ample—were conveyed up stairs to his quondam companions; and in a quarter of an hour the dishes and bottles were brought down in a state which the honest commissioner declared would save the restaurateur the trouble of washing.

“Our people up stairs, sir,” said he, “make clean work of it. They don’t get Champagne and asparagus every day—poor devils!”

Time flew with rapidity. Evening came, and with it the jailer, with an order from the judge. It is probable Lavalley had already taken the necessary measures to procure it before his visit.

“I am requested to give you what money you want,” said the director down stairs. He was going to make some magnificent donation to all his fellow-prisoners, if not, in fact, to pay their debts outright,

when he remembered that he was lavishing money not his own. He contented himself, therefore, by taking for himself a more moderate sum than he had at first proposed, and ordering certain benevolent favours for the prisoners. The good commissioner was by no means forgotten, but received a donation which he appeared to think a fortune. After a few other donations and arrangements, and changing his loose prison suit for that he usually wore, he once more stepped outside the door of his dismal abode, from which several times he had believed he could never emerge again till carried by careless hands to a neglected grave.

Lavalle had sent a horse, which was held by a servant at the door. Claude mounted into the saddle with the feeling of a monarch who is about to return to a kingdom he has saved, at the head of an army he has led to victory. His sensations on riding through the town—on feeling himself again amid moving crowds—on passing the old Schloss—on reaching the Brandenbourg gate, and pushing his horse to a full gallop along the broad, fragrant avenues of the wood, we shall leave to the imagination of the reader; hoping that he may, if possible, often enjoy a pleasure as delightful, without purchasing it with pains as disagreeable as those our hero had suffered. Suffice it to say, he suffered no disagreeable thoughts of business to break upon the sensations of that hour. Again he breathed the fresh air of Heaven; again the calm old trees, streams, and flowers were around him, and no object met his eye without conveying to his soul a sense of pure hope and exquisite pleasure; for if the past was without happiness, it had been also without self-reproach.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAVALLE had directed his servant to appoint a meeting with Claude, as soon as he should have finished his ride, at his own lodgings. On arriving there as the cool afternoon shadows began to descend upon the earth, he found the groom waiting for the horse; and he understood the delicacy which had induced Lavalle to leave him the first few hours of his freedom to his own reflections, or rather sensations. He now longed for the meeting with his friend with impatience. There was much which he had to ask. He had been completely cut off from the world. He knew nothing of the great political changes going on around him. He was ignorant of what had occurred in Berlin during his absence. Where was General St. Hillaire? Where was Kühl? He had heard nothing more of him, nor of the fortunate owner of the purse. Not one of all his acquaintances had come to see him, so much had his reputation been injured by the misrepresentations of Elkington—the statements of Carolan—the blow which he had received unresistingly—and his sudden fall from a state of independence to utter poverty. He learned of Lavalle all that he required. General St. Hillaire had been, ever since his imprisonment, ill in bed. Of Kühl Lavalle could state nothing, except that very probably he was ignorant of the fact that Claude was confined. Plans were now arranged for the future. Claude positively refused to accept of the money as a loan, or that he might advance it to Carolan, but that he would wait till he had earned it by his own labour. He had no hope of being able to resume his station in society, and he determined to accommodate himself at once to the new one to which Providence had destined him. He avoided making any inquiry of Ida, and Lavalle did not touch upon that subject, thinking, perhaps, that he had already said

more than he had a right to in the hurry of his joy. He promised Claude a class of five every evening, at a thaler an hour; and five at separate hours during the day, also at a thaler, making ten thalers a day, or sixty thalers a week; a princely income for a poor professor of languages; but Lavallo was an able patron, and put a heart into his undertakings which did not allow them to fail. He determined to call on K uhl, and procure also his aid; and they calculated that, in a short time, he could pay his debt to Carolan and the London banker, entirely extricate himself from pecuniary embarrassment, and be in the receipt of a comfortable income till circumstances should offer an occupation more agreeable to his taste. It was decided that he should go into a plain lodging the next day, call in all his bills, and Lavallo would state the prospect of a speedy settlement to the few creditors for their remaining small balance. The next morning, accordingly, Claude found a single plain room, kept by a poor old widow lady, who agreed to board, as well as lodge him, at a moderate price. Lavallo took the watch out of the jailer's hands and bought it himself, allowing for it the sum it originally cost; and undertook himself to superintend all the affairs of his friend, while the latter should devote himself to his new avocations. In less than a week, the whole number of scholars was procured. Mr. K uhl had heard nothing of Claude; and concluding, from his nonappearance, that he had left town for the summer, he made no inquiries after him. He was shocked to learn of his vicissitudes, and delighted to be able to render him any assistance. His whole family entered into his plan, and agreed to become pupils in English; and Claude soon found himself completely established in his new vocation, with the most pleasing prospects of success. His room was plain, but, after his period of probation in the prison, truly comfortable. The furniture was ordinary, but neat. The good woman supplied his meals in the house; but finding that it would be more conve-

nient for her, as well as less expensive for himself, he offered to eat at the same table with her, and he requested her to make no change in her usual fare, except in the addition of the quantity necessary for another person.

Poor Claude was now, from necessity, excluded from the society where he had before been received with so much attention; and, had this not been the case, he would by no means have sought it. There were not wanting several—and they the most cultivated and distinguished people—whom, had a selection been in his power, he would, from the first, have chosen for his friends; who seemed to take a kind of interest in him, inspired partly by his history as recounted by Lavalle, and partly by his personal manners and character. The incident of the purse of gold and his refusing the reward, at the moment when he had just heard of his ruin, had been everywhere related by Mr. Kühl, and had reached royal ears. Expressions of admiration had been repeated from lips whose opinions were not likely to be gainsaid; and his character as an honest man was made apparent, and was growing every day more so. His presence in Berlin, his lowly occupation, his unintermitting industry, and the nature of the employment he had adopted, brought him in contact with many people, who were struck with the modesty and yet quiet dignity of his manners, the plainness of his dress, and the punctuality and cheerful conscientiousness which he put into his labours. There was a general harmony and consistency in his life, which spoke for him against calumny; and the mild yet steady firmness with which he met, when accidentally they crossed his path, those whom he had once known on terms of equality, and who knew he had not only descended from the rank in which he had first appeared, but had unresistingly received a blow rather than fight a duel, engaged their respect and altered their unfavourable opinion of him. Rumours, too, of the assassin who had twice attempted his life,

had awakened all the watchfulness of the police, and was now generally and implicitly believed, although at first doubted. This threw a new sympathy around Claude, and produced another curious effect. The character of Elkington had begun to be whispered about; his affair with the officer—his exposure at cards—the displeasure of his father, etc. The fierce brutality with which he had conducted himself in the quarrel with Denham began now to be more coolly canvassed, even by those who at first thought it excusable. Although, in the interview with his mother, where his passions, roused to their highest fury by her narrative and the dangers impending over him, he had so far forgotten himself as to inflict a blow upon the author of his being; although, during that interview, the outer doors had been locked and doubly locked, the incident had transpired, the occurrence was reported and credited. Indeed, anything would have been credited of Elkington; and now the attempts upon Claude's life were laid to his charge. It is thus that such a character at length becomes an object of universal distrust and suspicion.

It had been before stated in the journals—but Claude, in his prison, knew nothing of it—that the death of the Earl of Beverly had been announced prematurely. He had fallen into a fit from which no human skill could save him, and it was improbable that he could ever have the use of his senses again, at least until the moment of his death. Elkington therefore remained longer in a state of suspense, and had gone to London with his mother. The Digbys had also gone. Nothing more had been heard of them in Berlin, or of their unfortunate daughter.

Under these circumstances, Claude began to be regarded as at least an honest man, and a man of principle. All who had dealings with him acknowledged even that, when they were not paid, he had made every possible sacrifice to satisfy their demands. His very presence in the streets, where he might be occa-

sionally seen passing to and from the various houses of his pupils, was an answer to the principal charges against him. His hard labour—his self-deprivation of all the luxuries and amusements of life—the simple and even rude dress which he now wore, if without pride, at least without shame—and the constant friendship and praises of Lavallo, were all in his favour. He was not unfrequently invited, poor and unfashionable as he now was, to dine at the tables of Monsieur de N—— and General St. Hillaire, as well as two or three others, who believed him to have made the great sacrifice of his passions and his reputation as a man of courage—that treasure which an honourable mind would purchase with life—to a conscientious principle of action. These invitations he however declined, from a feeling that the poor and those in debt should indulge in no pleasures which might lead to the slightest expense. Besides, satisfied with the purity of his actions, he shrank from the attention which they excited; and his life, in the midst of a great city, surrounded by moving armies and a glittering court, was almost as solitary and simple as that of Robinson Crusoe in his island. He had steeled his heart to meet the world; and, strange to say, notwithstanding his fall, he was happier than before. He seemed to have regained his independence. Occupation gave him wholesome spirits. The direction of his energies to a single purpose excluded weak reveries and idle apprehensions from his mind. He thought of Ida sometimes, but it was as one dead. Respecting her sentiments towards him he was still uncertain. It had happened two or three times that she had seen him in the street: sometimes when he was walking alone, thoughtful and sad, in the Park, sometimes hastening along the street to his daily toils. He could not but remember that at Monsieur de N——'s, the last time they had met in society, when he sought her eye, she turned away, as if unwilling to address him. He knew this was an act of obedience to an arbitrary father,

but it was enough to keep him from intruding upon her again, even with a look; and on the occasions of these accidental encounters, he cast his eyes to the ground with an humble pride, of which he could not know the effect upon this young girl. Often, in his walks, too, he met the various persons of the *société*; and, although at first it pained him, after a little time he was only amused to see the unfeelingness with which some met him. At first he had, from an unpremeditated sense of courtesy, bowed to the still happy acquaintances of his former hours. But so many among them discovered a disinclination to receive even a passing recognition, that he determined to address no one first. Some had bowed in return, but hastened by as if afraid to be addressed by him; some returned his salutation with a stately air of superiority; some replied with an inclination so slight and cool, and a look so soon averted, as to indicate plainly how offensive they found the impertinence of recognising them; while others, with an ostentatious care, dropped their eyes to the ground, lifted them to the sky, or turned them away till he had passed. There were not wanting some who stared in his face, without thinking it necessary to use ceremony in gratifying their curiosity, but who, on his civil bow on meeting their glances, only opened their eyes and mouths a little wider, and, with a steady gaze of astonishment, suffered his courtesy to remain unanswered, or to be replied to exactly as would have been the case had they been unexpectedly addressed by an entire stranger. It would be paying a poor compliment to these gay circles to say that the class we have described formed the majority. Often he was stopped by the gentle, the cultivated, and the refined, with kind and affable inquiries after his health and prospects. Some distinguished him thus in his altered fortunes with more marks of respect than they had bestowed before. And there were ladies—young and old—who, by the simplest acts of affability, meeting him with exactly

the same charming familiarity with which they had always greeted him, appeared to his grateful and impressionable mind in such a fair light—the old so good, the young so graceful and lovely—that surely, had the proud, the conceited, and the narrow-minded known how strong a feeling of admiration could be produced by such simple sacrifices, there would have been no superciliousness and arrogance among them; if not natural sweetness of character, good sense would have made them less pretending. But there are people who have neither. If the limits of the story would permit, we could find materials for a goodly volume in the experience of our hero from the receipt of the fatal letter withdrawing his income, to that when he found himself the possessor of sufficient money to discharge the amount of Carolan's debt, as well as all else that he owed in the world. There are two or three episodes narrated at large, and an edifying succession in the manuscript of the king's library, from which this history is drawn, which it would gratify us to lay before the reader, did time and space permit. One refers to the illness of a little boy, the son of the poor old lady with whom Claude boarded, and who, being ill of a contagious disorder, was attended in person by Claude, at the peril of his life and against the warnings of the physician. The poor little fellow, notwithstanding this service, died; and a part of Claude's earnings were appropriated to paying the mournful expenses attending the committal of his sweet little body to the earth. The old lady knew no one to tell this to. The doctor said the gentleman was a fool, and always spoke of him as such, without always giving the reasons on which that flattering epithet was founded. Claude himself was not in the habit of making his own acts the topic of conversation, and therefore this affair was never known till the doctor one day, on finding that Claude had employed a more eminent physician, let it out in revenge, and to ruin his character as a man of sense.

Another of these episodes describes how old Mr. Kühl had a daughter, Mademoiselle Kühl—how she was about eighteen years of age—that her charms of person were equalled only by her heart and mind—and how she spent so much time in studying the irregular verbs, adjectives, and conjunctions of the English tongue, under the tutelage of her handsome and melancholy young professor, that, before she was aware of the progress she was making, she found she had acquired a considerable knowledge upon other subjects besides syntax and prosody. She grew so reserved and cool to Mr. Wyndham, that that young gentleman, entirely engaged with his grammars and dictionary, concluded she had taken offence against him. With a simplicity rather violent in a youth who, however fond of rural beauty, had not spent *all* his life in the country, he addressed old Mr. Kühl upon the subject; and was made to open his very interesting eyes wider than he had done for some time by a frank explanation of the sudden cause from Kühl, and an offer of a furnished house in the Linden, near the Thiergarten—a banker would hold payable to his order the sum of 100,000 thalers, Prussian money—and the young lady herself, with a pair of eyes as full of tenderness as a star is of light; and all these on no more difficult a condition than the utterance of the little monosyllable “Yes.” But that word, short and easy as it may be, is often the source of profound consequences, and is often found the most difficult, and sometimes, also, the most dangerous in the dictionary.

Claude was astonished at the proposal of this offer, but his astonishment was not greater than that of Mr. Kühl upon hearing him respectfully but firmly decline it.

“What! zounds! hey! refuse a fortune of 100,000 thalers, with such a girl as my Emily! and you scarcely out of prison? Refuse my Emily? what! hey!”

“My esteemed friend,” said Claude, with a delicacy and tact which his kind patron perfectly understood

and deeply felt, "I can never refuse what the young lady has herself never offered, and perhaps would not sanction; but I may tell *you*, in confidence, that long before I knew you—I—I—"

"Ah, keh!" said the old gentleman. "It is so—is it? Well—I—she—we had better say no more about it."

"I may add," said Claude, "that even when I commenced with your family, their knowledge of English was so good that they scarcely required my services; and now they are almost in a state to teach it themselves. Let me therefore withdraw as a tutor, and meet you and them hereafter only as a friend. I have already more than I can attend to, for I believe everybody in Berlin has undertaken to learn English."

"Be it so," said Mr. Kühl. "I should feel awkward in my present position with any other person," added he, gravely, and with some confusion; "but you—in every breath, in every glance—are a *man of honour*; a man," he added, with some feeling, "whom a father can trust with the sacredest secret of his daughter's soul."

The manuscript goes on to say, that for a period Claude continued his visits to the house, but they gradually grew fewer and farther between, and at length entirely ceased.

The third circumstance, which, however useful it would be in swelling our history to the required size, had we not on hand "metal more attractive," is the conduct of Monsieur Rossi. He recovered, and resumed his toils as a French teacher; but he was pale, melancholy, and *distract*. He lived almost on the bounty of Claude. His manner was strange and unsocial. He exhibited no gratitude for the favours he had received and was daily receiving; but demanded more money as if of his banker. Claude tried to sooth him into some kind of companionship, but his efforts were fruitless. He was taciturn and gloomy in society. When they met in the street, this singular being often avoided him. In all cases of want, however, he

did not hesitate to seek him and solicit his aid, and to coolly apply the gratuity to luxuries which the giver denied to himself. With a spirit which a *blow* had irritated to madness, he did not hesitate to live on the charity of another, and to spend in selfish follies his friend's hard-earned gains. Claude at length perceived that he was not, after all, an object of real merit, and one day he frankly refused to give him money. His demeanour on the occasion was cold, ungrateful, and mean. He at first begged, and then knelt down and implored for a few thalers. Disgusted and astonished, Claude refused positively, and told him to seek elsewhere his living hereafter. He offered to exert himself, if he wished, to procure him scholars, but not to give him the means of living in idleness and intemperance. He told him he had just enough to pay his debts, and that he was now about to pay Carolan.

"Ah, oh!" said Rossi. "You remember, perhaps, what I told you about Ida. It was a lie. It was all my own fabrication."

"Be it so," said Claude. "I did not speak of it."

"But you think of it often," said Rossi. "I am not blind. I have seen you—in the night even—lingering by her house."

"Do you dog my steps, sir?" said Claude, sternly.

"Yes—yours and hers," said Rossi. "Many an hour I have watched you both unseen, undreamed of. She must not suppose I have forgotten the vile blow I received in her presence and on her account, and that she touched afterward, in friendship, the hand that struck me. As for you, sir—what if she does love you? what if she has been ill—to death almost? what if her health is gone—her beauty fading—her heart heavy—her eyes, even, full of misery? Does she think I pity her? Not a bit. I gloat on these signs of despair!"

"Rossi," said Claude, "what madness is this? Who told you the Countess Ida was ill?"

"My own eyes—my own heart; and not only that

she is ill, but that she is ill for—you. And *you*, who have stolen her from me—you deny me the poor means to live! Look to it! you and she too. I have waited and waited, and paused and paused! I have been by her in hours when she thought herself alone—in the day—in the night—in the crowd—in solitude—watching—gazing—Weak fool! the scene must close. The fire is lighted on the altar—the high-priest attends—the victim is bound. Look to it! sir!”

He stamped his foot fiercely. His features were pale and haggard, his eye flashed with a fearful expression, and he withdrew, slamming the door violently after him. This conduct confirmed a suspicion, which had glanced across Claude's mind before, that the poor being had moments of insanity, and to that he ascribed the vague threats which he uttered; but whether they were directed against himself or Ida, he could not tell.

At length, however, the money was in his hand to pay the demand of Carolan, who, through his lawyer, had demanded the highest rate of interest, and all the costs of the suit and his imprisonment. The other debts were already paid. He accordingly met the lawyer and paid the judgment. It was on a pleasant morning in the latter part of the summer that he set off to demand a personal interview with Carolan, the last, richest, and hardest of his creditors. It was his intention to ask of Carolan a retraction of the suspicions he had expressed against him. He went, therefore, to his magnificent palace, from which he was now excluded as an inferior being. He was much altered by the constant labours, events, and feelings of the last few months. His health was enfeebled. His cheeks were pale and thin, and his once smooth face showed lines of care and sorrow. Poverty, which did not break his spirit, had worn upon his body. The thought of *debt* had caused him many a bitter day and sleepless night. It seemed even as if he were sinking gradually into the grave; a fact of which, by

the sadness on his brow, he might have been conscious. His clothes, too, were poor and faded. The money necessary to dress himself better, he had, even from his slender earnings, bestowed on Rossi, or the little boy who had perished from the earth like an early flower, and whom he had ardently loved. He had sent some, also, to his banker, to be paid to Mrs. Denham, without receiving any answer from or news of her; and the resolution to pay all his debts before Carolan's demand had obliged him to spend nothing on his own person.

As he approached the palace of Carolan there was about it an air of grandeur which contrasted singularly with his own humble sphere. Two or three serving men in livery were lounging at the door, and several equipages were drawn up in front—the panels glittering with the ostentatious arms of the owners; the chasseurs, in their gorgeous dresses, lounging about; and the coachmen asleep on their boxes, exhausted with late hours and hard work. As he entered the hall, the servants did not move from their careless attitudes—the very men who once, at the sight of him, sprung up with the violent respect they were taught to pay alone to the rich and great. Cards were an expense he had long laid aside, and he had written his name on a piece of paper.

“Well,” said one of the men, with a round face and goggle eyes, and bursting with good feed and lazy living, “what do you want?”

“To see Monsieur le Comte Carolan.”

“I don't think it likely you'll succeed in doing that at present,” replied the man, taking the paper unceremoniously from his hand, and looking at him from head to foot. “Monsieur le Comte is engaged; you'd better call to-morrow.”

“Do me the favour to take my name in,” said Claude.

“Why, monsieur, he is with company now; and as he goes to France the day after to-morrow, he has no

time to lose. Hadn't you better leave your business with me?"

"To France? With his family?"

"Ay, with Mademoiselle Ida."

"With Mademoiselle Ida?"

Claude's heart felt an old twinge of a malady which he had striven hard to overcome.

"I must see him, then, to-day, and I will only pay it into his own hands."

"Well, if the man *insists* on it," said the other footman, "you'd better let him go into the study and wait. I'll take your name, monsieur. Walk up into the study."

The two men mounted the broad flight of steps, whose velvet carpet felt strange beneath his feet. One went in with the name. The other passed through three or four of the spacious and gorgeous rooms into a smaller and most exquisitely furnished cabinet, the walls clothed with richly-bound books and priceless paintings, and full of all the thousand elegances and luxuries of the rich and great. He sat down on a chair in the embrasure of one of the windows, half concealed by stands of flowers, curtains, and statues. He had not been there a minute when a step was heard. The door opened, and Ida entered. Claude did not move either to conceal or reveal himself, but he perceived at once she did not see him, and was not aware that any one was present. She passed to a bookcase and took out a book. Her face was pale and sad. She was not at all the same careless and happy girl whom he had seen in the portrait. The time which had passed over her had left its marks, and she was really changed. Yet, as he gazed again, with a rapture that almost suspended his being, he thought her more beautiful than ever. There was in her countenance more thought and character. It had that sweetness which patient grief gives, and which Raphael has portrayed with such an inspired hand. Claude could not wholly exclude the idea that the

changes in her face might have been occasioned partly by him. The fervour of his own love rose again in his bosom; and to have thrown himself at her feet, and said one farewell, he would have consented to die the same hour. But he restrained himself. He remembered his promise, his duty, and her happiness, and he sat silent. She was passing out again with the book she had taken down, when, by some strange chance, she returned to look at a tuberoses, recently brought in, which she had not seen before. The flower, with a number of others, stood on a large stand between her and himself, and had hitherto prevented her seeing him. As she advanced, he rose. His eyes were bent to the ground, his face was pale. He scarcely knew whether he felt more pain or pleasure, and he could not repress or hide his agitation. She knew him instantly; but at the sight of him—his pale, thin face, his mean clothes, his dusty boots, and all the apparel of poverty—a half-uttered shriek and shudder escaped her, and she sank into a chair covering her face with her hands. Yes! it was love—ingenuous, artless love—unused to the womanly power of concealment; and the deep crimson which succeeded the pallor of her forehead and neck, and all that those trembling and beautiful hands sought in vain to hide, taught her as well as him, that, without words, the sacred secret of her soul was betrayed.

It seems that, with the innate dignity and purity of her nature, she recovered her self-possession almost instantly, for she rose and said, extending her hand frankly,

“Mr. Wyndham—you have been so long absent—you—you are so greatly altered—that the sight of you startled me.”

“Let me hope,” said Claude, and once more she listened to the tones of a voice so much loved, so long unheard, and now touched with a tremour that betrayed irresistible agitation, “that neither my absence, nor anything that has occurred during it, has deprived me of the—esteem—of—of—so valued a friend.”

It was mutually clear to both the lovers—for so we trust the sagacious reader has long since found them—that this accidental meeting was to be reduced as soon as possible from the tone of high feeling which it had first awakened, to the safer and less embarrassing courtesy of ordinary society. Both wished it, and both intuitively felt the delicacy and propriety which demanded it.

“Indeed, Mr. Wyndham, I should do myself but poor justice if I did not say how clearly I have perceived the propriety of your conduct, and how little I have shared the errors of others respecting you.”

“You make me happy,” said Claude; and with a deeper fervour, which he could not repress, and perhaps was not aware of, he added,

“The approbation of such as you is all I dare hope; and *yours*—is all I desire.”

“We are about visiting France!” said Ida, somewhat hastily. “My father, in doing so, acts against the advice of all his friends; but he is very firm in his determinations. My uncle, Colonel St. Marie, proposed to leave Paris; but my father is hastening there to prevent him, and has offered to aid him in the cause of the king. The strange revolution going on there my father thinks will be put down very soon; and he is willing, if his majesty wishes, to enter into his service. You know he spent his youth in the army.”

“It is a very dangerous journey,” said Claude.

“But he expects a high office from the king—and is determined to go immediately.”

“We shall not see you again, then!” said Claude.

“No; and I am very fortunate in this opportunity to bid you farewell. My father will be disengaged, I believe, in a moment.” She held out her hand. “I wish you all happiness, Mr. Wyndham.”

This was the weak moment which Claude had scarcely the strength to resist. He took the hand extended to him. He attempted to speak, but after the first word his utterance failed. To have indicated by

the slightest pressure of that hand the feelings of his bosom—to have expressed with a gesture what words refused to utter—to have raised those soft fingers to his lips, as they yet lingered in his, were the impulses of his soul. But he was one of those men who had learned to govern himself, to make sacrifices, to resist impulses, and to act with honour in all the most minute and secret affairs of life. He dropped the hand almost coldly; but all his prudence could not prevent the thought which swelled his heart from finding utterance.

“Is it for ever—?”

Her eyes met his, and she replied,

“It is for ever.”

There was a step. She was gone; and he rose and hastily dashed the drops from his eyes, to meet the conceited and unrelenting father of the being whom he now loved with more fervour than ever, and who was to bless his eyes no more.

“Well, sir,” said Carolan, sitting down by a table, without asking his visiter to follow his example, “what procures me the honour of this visit?”

“Count Carolan,” said Claude, advancing quietly, and even respectfully, to the table, for he had now not even the desire to retaliate the rudeness of this weak man, “I have come to state to you that the sum for which you imprisoned me is paid.”

“I have no time myself to arrange these affairs with you, but my lawyer will.”

“No, monsieur, it is already arranged; but I wish, before separating from you, without the probability of our ever meeting again, to inform you, that the debts which, by a very peculiar accident, I found myself unable to pay in the commencement of the summer, are now all discharged; not by any arrangement or any accident, but by the results of my personal labour.”

“I have nothing to do with all this, sir. It may be true or not. I have neither the time nor the inclination to inquire, as your character and yourself are equally indifferent to me.”

“Could no proof make you publicly unsay, at least, that part of the aspersions which I learn you have cast on my honesty in pecuniary matters?”

“I know nothing of you or your affairs, sir; and I wish to know nothing of them. When a man has deceived me once, I find it quite enough. My hospitality is sometimes abused by persons whom I take up on too slight grounds—”

“Take up! Count Carolan.”

“But I am a little too well read in human nature to suffer myself to be betrayed twice by the same person; one of the servants will show you out, sir; and, our mutual affairs being now settled, I hope—” He rose and rang the bell.

“Adieu, sir,” said Claude; “if I thought you capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, I would ask you to reflect hereafter that you have refused to do justice to the character which you have proofs is free from reproach, and that you have not thought it unworthy of your courage to insult a person who mildly claimed your good opinion, and whom you know to be without the defence usually possessed by gentlemen under the same circumstances.”

“I can’t remain listening to you, sir, all day; and you will excuse me—”

They were interrupted by a loud shriek. It was sudden and piercing, and announced extreme terror. It was followed by a confusion of various noises, an opening of doors, a treading of feet, and several voices calling out.

“What can that be?” said the count, his pompous manner leaving him entirely; and they both hastened out, Claude as much agitated as he, for he thought he recognised the voice which had uttered the scream as Ida’s. They ran across two or three rooms, which seemed to their eager suspense interminable, and reached, at length, the large hall used sometimes as a dining and sometimes as a ball room. At the farther end a sight met their view which wellnigh deprived them of the power of motion. Ida, her hands

extended, her face struck with terror, stood shrinking from the fury of a stranger, apparently in a delirium of rage and revenge. He held a large pistol in each hand, of which one was presented at the breast of the fainting girl. The servants, called by her shrieks, had crowded the doors; but as the maniac—for it was Rossi, in a fearful paroxysm of insanity—turned his dreadful eye and levelled weapon upon them, they crowded and shrunk back with hasty terror. Never was a more frightful object than the unhappy young man at this moment. His livid face wore the hideous grin of a lunatic. His thick hair was wild about his head. He mowed and chattered to himself, and pointed first his long finger and then the pistol at the terrified being whose charms had driven his senses awreck. At the same time, he made wry faces, sometimes at her, and sometimes at beings who seemed to be hovering around him in the air; and his motions were so sudden and fantastic, that no one could have seen him thus abandoned to all the ecstasy of madness, even in chains, without horror and fear. But now, thus armed, all gave up Ida as lost. It was a moment of most intense and agonizing expectation, and the wretched being went on mowing and chattering to himself till the foam stood upon his lips.

"Rossi," said Claude, advancing upon him cautiously, while Carolan stood petrified in motionless despair.

The terrible intruder turned at the sound of his voice, and laughed till the hall echoed again.

"Ah ha!" said he, "where is Elkington now? He struck me once—oh God—the dog! the reptile! But the sacrifice is prepared! Why does he not come to claim his wife?"

"Rossi, my kind friend," said Claude, in a soothing voice, but one which trembled with horror, lest, ere he could succeed in grasping him, he might fire upon the sweet girl, upon whose bloody sacrifice he seemed so determined.

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"What!" cried Rossi, "you will come forward? Stir an inch—stir one hair's breadth, and she dies!" and he levelled both his pistols at Ida.

Carolan started to rush forward, but Rossi extended his arm with a gesture which arrested at once the advance of the agonized father.

"Keep his attention this way," said Claude to Carolan, in a low tone, "and I will secure him!"

"I will," murmured Carolan, shaking in every limb; "I will, I will. Here you have not the courage to look at *me*, you foul madman," he continued.

"Not the *courage*?" echoed Rossi; and he darted upon Carolan, but suddenly he stopped. With the shrewdness of a madman, he suspected a connivance, and he turned to look for Claude. He perceived him now fairly in the middle of the floor, alone, and completely between him and Ida. At this sight his fury seemed lashed into new delirium. He stamped his foot and exclaimed,

"Stand aside! You canting, ignominious fool, stand aside! Will you too fall? Away. I am going to fire. The hour—the instant has come. I have gloated for months on this moment. At length it is here. Leave her to her fate."

Claude stood back before Ida. Had he advanced to seize her, he could have fired at her by changing his position. His only hope was to shield her with his person, even if it could be done only by receiving the ball in his own body. He placed himself, therefore, before her in such a way as to protect her entirely from danger.

"No, no," cried Ida, convulsively; "noble! generous! no, no—"

But, as she spoke, Rossi fired, and the ball lodged in the wall within an inch of Claude's head.

"Step aside, I say, reptile!" howled the maniac again, advancing with the other pistol drawn, and gnashing his teeth with fiendish rage; but Claude stood firm, lifted his tall figure so as to shield completely the form of Ida, and fixed his eye steadily on his adversa-

ry, who advanced so near as to make the destruction of one of his intended victims almost certain. He had approached to within two or three yards, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when Ida fainted and fell heavily upon Claude's arm, who stamped his foot suddenly, and exclaimed, "Fire," and at the same time rushed forward with his burden in such a way as to throw the maniac from his aim. He started, and at the same moment the pistol was discharged. A shriek of horror burst from all the household who had assembled to witness this frightful scene. The ball again buried itself in a splendid door at a still greater distance from its intended objects. Carolan himself, accompanied by twenty servants, now leaped upon the unfortunate wretch, who, in the impotence of his fury, had dashed the heavy butt of the pistol into his own head with a force which wounded him dangerously. All was now confusion. Claude committed the senseless form of the fair girl he had saved at such imminent risk to the arms of her trembling father; who, as often happens with men of feeble understanding, had been so bewildered and stunned by the greatness of the danger, that, whatever might have been his courage, he did not know what to do. Had he advanced, he believed it would only have been to behold his daughter murdered long before he could reach her or the assassin.

A confusion of joy now took place of the despair which had, till the securing of Rossi, filled every mind. Claude was the object of universal admiration. In the dangerous crisis in which he found himself, he had exhibited a self-possession and courage which surprised everybody, and which alone had saved the life of Ida. That he had ever been suspected of *cowardice* was now a matter of astonishment; and it was acceded that few men would have so calmly faced almost certain death. The idea that he had suffered a blow rather than fight a duel now received a kind of interest, which raised him to a rank above that of a merely

brave man. Simple bodily courage is by no means a rare gift; and, when possessed without moral courage, does not entitle a man to the high standing which he sometimes claims on account of it.

CHAPTER XIX.

IDA had no sooner been safely conveyed to her apartment, than Carolan returned to seek Claude, with an embarrassment which he could scarcely conceal. He had not an understanding sufficiently enlarged to teach him how to act on such an occasion; and the dictates of his heart, however naturally good, had so long been subservient to his vanity, that it had ceased to serve him as a useful guide. He thanked the preserver of his daughter with a gratitude which was not free from condescension; and, in acknowledging the debt, he showed that he wished it had not been incurred. He had neither learned to forgive nor to ask forgiveness; graces which belong only to sense and feeling.

On the day after this event Ida had quite recovered from the effects of her fright, and Carolan sent a servant to Claude's humble lodging to say she would be happy to see and thank her preserver. The note was couched in terms of cold pride, in which the inflated character of the count was easily visible. Claude was carefully informed that the meeting was at the request of the count himself.

Without taking umbrage at the eccentric weakness of a character in which he felt little interest, on the next day he repaired to Carolan's house at the appointed hour. The count met him in the study. He wished his daughter, he said, to thank him for her deliverance, as he did himself, with a stately gratitude and an offer of his purse to any amount.

“After the great service you have rendered me,” said he, “I will freely supply your pecuniary wants to any extent. You may call upon my banker during my absence in France, whither a high public duty calls me. My daughter is weak, and I trust you will not trespass too much—”

“Were it left to my choice,” said Claude, “I should prefer not to oppress her with the useless task of returning thanks, which you consider so requisite.”

“You will permit me to say this is at your request?” asked the count.

“Certainly.”

His brow cleared up.

“Well, then, be it so; to say the truth, she is not well, and we start early to-morrow morning. Such men as I are demanded by the perilous state of affairs in France, where all the chivalry and talent of Europe ought to concentrate itself; and I deem it proper—as well due to myself as from an imperative sense of duty to his gracious majesty the King of France, and, indeed, to the cause of royalty over the world—to offer my poor talents, such as they are. I believe the cause will not be lighter for my attaching myself to it. A high consciousness of the manner in which I have performed all my duties, makes me hope that I shall not be an unacceptable accession to his majesty’s strength. It would afford me pleasure to ask you to drive with me to-day; but Prince L—— has begged to come, and—”

“It would be impossible for me to avail myself of your politeness,” said Claude, his feelings towards the daughter scarcely enabling him to preserve a decent exterior of respect before the father.

“Then, Mr. Wyndham, adieu; and if, as I trust I may hope, you deem my friendship worth accepting”—he held out his fore finger for Claude to shake—“it may be a pleasure for you to know that you have it. I am going out—shall I set you down?”

Claude declined the offer, bowed, and, without re-

ceiving the fore finger so condescendingly offered, took his leave.

The next day the Carolans took their departure for France.

In the mean time, the town rang with the gallantry of the action he had performed, and he suddenly became a kind of *lion*. This ill suited his simple habits, and he withdrew from attentions which he did not greatly value, and could not accept without embarrassment from his limited pecuniary means.

Poor Rossi had been taken from Carolan's to the asylum, where, in a week, although everything possible was done for him, and Claude visited him every day, he died. With him a strange life was closed—endured without profit to himself or others—a mind undisciplined—a heart not cultivated properly—passions without restraint or religion to govern them. His weak understanding had been rendered weaker by the want of education and moral principle; and to such a being the world is so full of dangers and pains—to be incurred without support, or endured without recompense—that even pity could scarcely sigh over his early grave. It was observed, in his last ravings, that the prominent incident in his imagination was the blow he had received from Elkington. He fancied it had left a festering spot upon his forehead—that the disgrace was one which could be washed out, not by a life of equal courage and simple virtue, but by revenging himself on Elkington, either by the sacrifice of himself or some one dear to him. “There must be *blood*,” thought the poor maniac, “ere I shall be able to recover from the humiliation.” Claude witnessed his closing scene with many serious reflections; and he was startled to remember what similar thoughts of blind revenge and reckless passion had filled his own mind the night when he himself had been struck by Elkington. He too had been tainted with the Gothic idea that anything could stain an immortal soul but its own evil passions, and that it was permitted one weak

human being to solace his own rage by shedding the blood of another. He too had thought of a duel—of self-destruction—of murder—of madness. But his calmer nature had recovered itself amid its communnings with the elements, had listened to the voice of God in the air, and seen his lessons in the heaven. Thus the master of himself, he turned from the temptations of the world; and, depending on his Creator alone, trod the painful path of right with the hisses of all around him ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER XX.

It was a curious coincidence in this passage of the life of Wyndham, that Rossi was scarcely dead when a message from Carl, his quondam domestic, earnestly prayed his presence at the criminal prison, where, confined after having been convicted of murder, he was awaiting execution. Absorbed in other affairs, and partly in consequence of the silence and privacy with which such matters are conducted in Prussia, Claude had received no intelligence of this till a note from Carl made him acquainted with his dreadful situation.

He immediately complied with his request, and was admitted to the convict's cell. It was with difficulty that he recognised him, so much was he altered by confinement and agony of mind. He was pale and haggard. His manner had lost all its gayety, and he seemed several years older than before.

"It is so good of monsieur to come," said he, on seeing Claude. "I want, before I quit the world, to ask your pardon for the injury I have done you."

"I grant it, most sincerely," said Claude.

"I have been a bad fellow, monsieur; but I have

repented, and I die with a full faith in our blessed Redeemer. I am content to die. I deserve it."

"Can nothing be done to commute your punishment?" asked Claude.

"No, monsieur. All has been done that was possible. My father and mother are both here. They have sought mercy of his majesty, but he has not thought proper to accord it; and yet my crime was not without provocation. You have doubtless heard what goaded me on to kill this man for whose death I am to be punished?"

"No, I have not heard it."

"He was my master, and a very bad, brutal man. He was not a good master as you were, but he was always scolding me. One day he called me so many names that I could not prevent myself replying, and I told him no gentleman would use such terms to his servant. He instantly struck me—and I have never yet submitted to a blow with patience—I strove to strike him back, but he was too strong for me. I asked him if he dared to meet me in the field—for I was born, sir, in a much higher station than a domestic—but he only laughed at me. I went to complain to the police. He declared I had offered to strike him first, and the police dismissed my complaint. What was I to do? Where was I to seek redress? I had often sworn that no one should ever strike me without my being revenged. I had heard many others swear the same. A blow I could not bear; and finding all other modes of righting myself in vain, I killed him with an axe, set the house on fire, and fled. I was pursued, overtaken, tried, condemned, and am now waiting the day of my execution. They say nothing can save me. But I have repented of my crime, and am resigned to my fate."

"Can I do anything for you?" said Claude, shocked almost beyond the power of speech by this scene.

"Grant me your pardon. It is all I ask. Besides the wickedness you detected me in, I have committed

many others. I have often robbed you of trifling things, such as I thought you would never miss. I often neglected your commands, and told you I had obeyed you when I had not. Lord Elkington and Lady Beverly are very bad people; and they paid me to tell all I could find out about you. But I have partially repaired my crime against you, as Madame Wharton will tell you. I could communicate a great secret, but she made me promise not to do so, and I shall not die with a lie on my lips. You can do nothing else for me, unless, indeed, to be present at the last moment. Promise me you will be there. I shall feel a consolation in thinking there is one person who regards me with mercy and pity."

"I promise," said Claude; "and, in the mean time, beg you will let me do all that is possible to alleviate your situation."

"No, no, I do not wish to see you again. I have done with earthly things, and must prepare for—*for—*hereafter."

He turned pale, and added,

"Ah, Mr. Wyndham, had I but been an honest man, and served you faithfully, how different would now be my situation!"

A priest here came in; and, as Claude withdrew, the poor fellow clasped his hand and kissed it earnestly.

"Adieu—for ever. May you be happy—and you *will be*. Remember the words of a dying man."

Claude left the prison much impressed in favour of Carl, who seemed to have been unprincipled more from the want of reflection than innate hardness of heart.

It was about one month after this interview that the announcement of an execution caused a sensation of lively horror throughout Berlin, where these frightful spectacles were rarely seen. According to his promise, Claude resolved to be present. It was on a magnificent day in July that he went forth, at three o'clock in the morning, to behold the unnatural cere-

mony of depriving a human being of that life which has been bestowed by the hand of God. The scene of this bloody operation was just on the outside of one of the city gates, on a wide, level sand-plain. The morning was one of those when the earth, air, and heaven wear a more than usually resplendent aspect. The sky was without a cloud. The pale moon was seen declining in the west, and the sun had just risen with a brilliancy that promised great heat during the day. The air was fresh and cool, and the breeze, here and there wafted over a dewy garden, came full of delicious odours. There was a stir perceptible over the whole town as soon as he issued from his door, and groups of persons might be seen stepping along, with marks of haste in their air and countenance; as he continued on his way the number increased, and carriages, carts, wagons, and droskies occasionally rattled by, till at length, turning into the long, narrow street which led to the gate on the outside of which the execution was to take place, he found a dense throng walking with a rapid pace all in the same direction; and the street was crowded with vehicles, of which the occupants, as well as the thousands of pedestrians, were, almost without exception, talking together with loud, gay voices, some jesting and laughing, some singing and shouting, and a few here and there brandishing bottles or huge sausages, which furnished their morning meal, and which was devoured with an hilarious mirth strangely contrasted with the solemn spectacle they were hastening to witness.

Half an hour's walk, through a multitude every instant growing more dense, on the whole well behaved, and composed in a considerable proportion of women and children, brought Claude through the gate and along one of the suburbs to a road leading into a vast, open field of heavy sand, in a corner of which a black mass of human beings—swarming like a cluster of bees around three dark, massive columns of brick, placed in the form of a triangle, immediately behind a

broad platform, also built of brick, and surrounded by an iron balustrade—announced the fatal point of attraction. On either side of the scaffold, at the distance of fifty or sixty yards, were several small, natural elevations of ground, on one of which, and fronting the dreadful stage where the dire act was so soon to be performed, Claude took his stand. He could perceive a few paces from him, and at the foot of the scaffold, a newly-dug grave. In a short time the increasing thousands had surrounded him, and in another half hour his eye, wherever it wandered, met nothing but the dense masses of human beings, packed close as in a theatre. The murmur of those thousands and thousands of voices, all blended into one sound, all full of one thought, of one expectation, could be heard rising into the air, like the rush of the surf on the distant beach. In a few moments several carriages—of the different functionaries who, from curiosity or duty, attended the scene—drove up a narrow passage kept open through the crowd by the mounted *gens d'armes*. Then came a body of cavalry, who were drawn up in a hollow square around the scaffold. Several companies of infantry followed, all silently and briefly disposed in the same solemn array; and a group of officers gathered in the centre at the foot of the scaffold, conversing together with cheerful courtesy, and exchanging gayly the greetings of the day. It seemed almost a mockery to Claude, that all this formidable array of force—these stern troops—these glittering and bristling arms—these trampling horses—should be gathered together on account of one helpless, trembling, feeble creature, bound, and opposing against the appalling preparations only his misery, his weakness, his humble prayer, his ghastly and terror-stricken face.

As yet no one had appeared upon the scaffold—that solitude to be presently filled by such unnatural actors. At length a single form mounted upon it. He bore on his arm a basket, and sprinkled from it many handfuls of wet sand or sawdust. He descended, and another

mounted the next moment, bearing a heavy burden, which he at length deposited. It was set with some care to secure it a firm stand. It was the block. He who placed it was smoking a segar. A broad leathern strap hung from it on one side, and a cord was flung down carelessly upon it. A hum of horror followed each of these proceedings; and the attention of the vast concourse, fixed with an intense interest upon these ominous arrangements, hushed them to a profound silence and motionlessness, except when some trivial preparation gave a token more of the dire act about to be perpetrated, and drew forth a new murmur of horror.

The hour for the execution was fixed at six o'clock. It now wanted five minutes. Every face in that vast multitude was turned towards the narrow channel which had been kept open through it by the gens d'armes for the melancholy cortège about to appear. At length a troop of horse rode up, and a half-suppressed cry announced that he—the unhappy object of this deep curiosity, of these appalling preparations—had arrived. A heavy common wagon appeared. In it were two priests. Seated on the floor of it, with his back to the horses, without a hat, was Carl. He caught Claude's eye as he passed, and kissed his hand to him. He looked calm, but dreadfully pale.

At the foot of the scaffold there was a pause. They stopped beside the grave; the unhappy being must have looked into it as he passed. He alighted from the wagon, and some moments were occupied in reading the sentence and other customary forms.

In the mean time, six or eight persons had mounted the scaffold. They were common-looking men, in their ordinary dress. They walked backward and forward, turned their eyes towards the vast, hushed multitude on every side, or regarded the group of priests and officers gathered about the prisoner. One of them, also, was smoking a segar. They had a careless, rude air, which jarred upon the feelings of many a gazer.

The preliminary ceremony being over, several persons mounted the scaffold. Among them were two who struck every eye, and drained the blood from every cheek. One was the fine-looking, erect young man about to yield his life to the society which thus repulsed him. The other was a giant in stature and strength—his hair sprinkled with gray—without his coat—and holding in his hand *an axe*. They had no sooner mounted than some one approached Carl and spoke to him. He started slightly at first, but, instantly complying, took off his coat, his waistcoat, his cravat, and rolled down his shirt off his neck and shoulders to the waist. He then stood erect over the block, clasped his hands, and lifted his eyes towards heaven in prayer. His face was turned towards Claude, whose whole system thrilled with unspeakable horror at the thoughts of his sensations in that tremendous moment. The endless mass of heads on every side was uncovered—motionless—hushed. Claude looked around on the scene so fair and beautiful. The morning sun mounting up the east, pouring gladness and abundance on so many millions of human beings—the bending sky—the waving trees—the distant city, whose roar could be heard rising on the summer air, and then at these vast crowds—those dark columns—that gray-headed giant leaning on his axe—and this young man, in the fullness of life, health, and strength, about to be thrust by his fellow-beings into eternity. Even as he stood thus a moment committing himself to God, and taking his last look at the nature so bright, so soft, so fair, so happy, the breeze, full of freshness, and balm, and gladness, and perfume, came kissing the murmuring tree-tops, and lifted the hair from that doomed head; the birds were warbling in the groves; the flowers were blooming in the gardens; the streams were gurgling through the wood; and a flock of pigeons came floating down to the very top of the scaffold, and made a circle around it, their white breasts shining in the light, and then—so near that the trem-

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bling victim might have heard the whirring of their wings, full of freedom and joy—swept off again, and were lost in the sunny distance.

The next instant the wretched being knelt and laid his neck on its last resting-place; the strap was instantly fastened over his shoulders, and his arms were tied to the block. The executioner advanced—lifted the axe, to lay its edge lightly on the spot he would strike. There was a blow, and an object fell heavily and rolled upon the scaffold. Some hand raised it by the hair—held the face, bloody, turbid, and convulsed, one instant to the crowd—and then wrapped it in a white napkin, which instantly assumed the same gory hue. Hasty hands unloosed the cord and strap, and a headless trunk was carelessly borne down and thrown into the grave already dug.

It was to avoid the odium of bearing *a blow* that the wretched youth had sought the fate of a felon.

There are readers who will shrink from this scene—who will find it too revolting to be described. Yes, it is revolting; but it should be painted in all its details, till the most audacious outrage upon humanity ever sanctioned by human laws shall be struck from the code of civilized nations. That which it is not permitted to describe should not be permitted to take place in the open day—before the public eye—before boys—women—children. Were all to witness the frightful spectacle, this ancient and barbarous custom would cease. If we have dared to hold the hideous picture up, it is that people who never give their attention to such things may know—may see what goes on about them—what they are liable to meet in their morning walk—openly perpetrated in the bright sunshine—in the public streets.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE Carolans had not been long gone when strange reports became general of the increasing anarchy in France. It was said that the utmost prudence was requisite in every resident of that unhappy country to avoid fatal collisions with one or the other of the raging parties. Every day brought fugitives who described their flight to have been attended with unheard-of perils. It was at length stated that the frontiers of France were closed against *all* future departures, and that the royal family themselves wished to leave their throne and native land, but were unable to do so. Day after day the accounts grew more alarming. Prussia, as indeed all Europe, was becoming more and more agitated. Poor Claude would have followed Carolan into France had he possessed the pecuniary means; but, alas! the interest excited by his private affairs was merged in that of the general welfare. The most enthusiastic admirers of English abandoned their studies for thoughts of a much more serious kind, and Claude found himself destitute. His friends had disappeared. Lavallo had gone to France again some time before. The Prussian army was put in motion. A tempest, vague and dark, seemed lowering over mankind. All Europe trembled. The Countess Carolan received news of her husband which threw her into a malady—from which she was threatened to be speedily released by death. Carolan, it was said, had been seized by the revolutionists—accused of attempting to aid the king—and thrown into prison, from which it was feared he would not escape with his life. Of Ida and St. Marie, no news could be obtained. It was a dreadful year; and as for Claude, in addition to all his apprehensions for Ida, he was often at a loss for

means to support life. No one would lend money at such a period; and, had there been lenders, he had no right to borrow what he saw no prospect of being able to repay. All occupation was at a stand. Europe appeared waiting, as men do beneath a black cloud, from which they look each moment to see burst the dreadful bolt, without daring to conjecture where it is to fall. In the actual course of necessity, to prevent himself from starving, he had contracted a bill at a baker's. It was for the simplest aliment which could sustain the body. It was for common bread. He owed the baker one thaler. The man demanded his money. Claude could not pay it. This new creditor was a large, portly, broad-shouldered person, with no neck, and a high, square head, the size of which almost amounted to deformity. His features were all, in a corresponding degree, large and uncouth. His eyes were round, green, and protuberant, and shaded by large shaggy brows. His nose was bloated, purple, and with hairs growing on the end. His mouth stretched from ear to ear, and his whole countenance, ploughed with time and debauchery, and Heaven knows what volcanic passions, looked like some ragged rock rent apart by a convulsion of nature. No smile ever softened those deeply-indented outlines, as no human feelings found their way into his long-hardened heart. His voice was hoarse, deep, and guttural; and when he spoke, even on the most trivial occasions, he grew red in the face with choler. His head was perfectly white—his limbs were swollen and gouty—his feet resembled those of an elephant—his hands were full of knots like the gnarled branches of some immemorial oak, and he had a spirit as unbendable. He was worth, men said, 300,000 thalers, accumulated by grasping every cent. On finding Claude's inability to pay, this curious old veteran, who perhaps might be regarded as something of a maniac in his way, sued him and obtained judgment, and took measures to cast him into prison.

"He shall stay there his year," said he, "or pay me my thaler."

Claude went to him, in company with the sheriff's officer who had arrested him, and endeavoured to soften his heart. The old man became furious at the sight of him. His face, always half purple, grew fiery with rage, and he swore he would have his thaler or his body.

"You are a scoundrel," said he, "to rob me of my money. You are my slave till you pay me. I hold to the law. Go! away with him. He is a robber."

And Claude was thrown into the very prison—the very room—and with the very people who had formerly been his companions under the same circumstances, although with two or three ominous exceptions.

In this position, Claude found himself at the lowest step of the ladder. He was a beggar—a wretch—a slave. He saw no other prospect than a year's confinement. An unutterable anguish came cold and deadening over his heart as he turned his eyes about the room, and regarded the gloomy, pitiless walls which had enclosed him—which were to shut him out from the world. As for soliciting aid, he knew no one among all his acquaintances to whom he could apply but St. Hillaire, Lavalle, and Madame Wharton. All of these were absent. For an instant the thought of self-destruction once more rose in his mind. The resources of his life seemed to be exhausted. He had struggled against a fate that was too much for him. Fortune, as if resolved to pursue him with persevering malice, had stripped him of everything which cheers, adorns, and blesses human life. No domestic affection shed an interior sunshine on his heart. No revered and beloved father—no affectionate and ever-watchful mother—no sister, with her unchanging fidelity and attachment—no brother, bound to him with the sustaining ties of friendship and truth—of old associations and mutual confidence. The only affection which had ever risen in his breast was quenched in dark and hopeless humiliation; and he felt that, in addition to

all these, poverty, captivity, disgrace—the desertion of his friends—the disgust he had conceived at the conduct of some from whom he had expected nobler conduct—the silence and apparent forgetfulness of Madame Wharton, who had impressed him with a warm esteem and friendship, altogether seemed to present life worthless, and death as the greatest happiness which could befall him. He reflected what an old Roman would do when honour, hope, and all were lost; and the words of the lofty and philosophic Cassius rose to his lips with a sad and solemn meaning :

“Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius :
Therein, ye gods, ye make the weak most strong ;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat :
Nor strong tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit ;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear,
I can shake off at pleasure.”

But, happily, he had learned to govern his impulses, and to seek his rules of action in a better school than the erring genius of heathen philosophy. A man who has borne slander, insult, and a blow from a sense of right, and who has turned from the woman he loved without a look rather than lead astray a young heart disposed to requite his affection, will do nothing rash, but has in it a principle of the truest courage as a support in the darkest hour. With an humble prayer to Him who can cast down and put up, who giveth and who taketh away, he “filed his mind”—he turned in upon himself—repressed his despair, and resolved to await with resignation the will of Heaven.

CHAPTER XXII.

HE had passed thus several days with all his philosophy and religion, pale, sad, and silent, when the jailer called him down to receive a visiter.

It was a stranger, booted and spurred in the English fashion, and speaking the English language. He approached and handed two letters. Claude opened and read. The first was as follows :

“ London, etc., etc.

“ Messrs. W. P. & Co., Berlin.

“ GENTLEMEN :

“ At the request of the Marquis of E——, and for his account, we hereby open a credit with you in favour of Mr. Claude Wyndham, for £1000 sterling, say one thousand pounds sterling, which you will please to supply him with, as he may require the same, on his presenting to you this letter.

“ We are, gentlemen,

“ Yours truly,

“ N. B. & Co.”

The other was from Madame Wharton. The first words thrilled him with emotion, which would have been rapture had it not been so mingled with bewilderment and incredulity.

“ MY SON—MY BELOVED SON !

“ You, who have borne adversity with greatness, will, I trust, meet prosperity with dignity. I have at length succeeded in throwing back the veil which Heaven in its wisdom had allowed to fall over us. You are, as from the first moment my secret presentiment might have taught me, the child of my bosom. Enclosed is

a package which I have prepared for you. It reveals your history and mine. I would give you no intimation of my convictions till they were confirmed. Not from my hand should you receive a new disappointment. The bill which accompanies this is your own. Do not hesitate to use it. It is but a small part of the inheritance of which you are now the master. Your father was the Earl of Beverly. That title is now yours. He has just expired, having previously completed all the arrangements essential to your undisputed assumption of his titles and estates. This great blessing of Providence I am fain to receive as a reward for a life spent in the path of *right*; but, in receiving it, let us not forget that all earthly blessings come mixed with calamity, and that there is no state of steady happiness but beyond the grave. I write to you calmly, my beloved son, from the very intensity of my feelings. I did not put pen to paper till I had calmed them by prayer, and sought from Him who gives and takes away the strength necessary to support me in this mixed hour of joy and sorrow. I have much to tell you, and my bosom yearns to hold you again, my son! Come to me as soon as you can, without neglecting duties more imperative. I have seen you sorely tried, and I know you to be equal to your own guidance; but remember that life is short, and the greatest happiness I can now know is your society. Everything is arranged for you without trouble. On reaching London you will drive to your own mansion in Grosvenor Square, lately occupied by your father, and just as he left it. The Marquis of E—— acts as your agent till your arrival, and begs me to say how profoundly he rejoices at this important change in your prospects. Come, my son! I would repeat the sacred name, and I would repeat ever, to the Disposer of human events, my prayer of grateful thanks for being permitted to write myself—your affectionate,

“Your too happy *mother*,

“ELLEN LAWTON.”

The packet which accompanied this was, as stated by Madame Wharton—whom, as well as Claude, we shall continue to call by her old name—a full history of the circumstances which attended her marriage, her separation from her husband, her subsequent life, the loss and apparent death of her child, with divers other particulars, many of which the reader is already acquainted with. It is to be regretted that the space allotted to our history will not permit us to give this letter, embracing, as it did, not only the past adventures of the lady—who now showed herself as able to bear prosperity as she had been to bear adversity—but the circumstances which first awakened her attention respecting Claude—her reveries, her suspicions, her hopes, and, lastly, her convictions, that the singular interest she had taken in the stranger who bore so remarkable a resemblance to her husband, from the first moment she saw him, was not merely accidental. The manuscript which the gracious permission of the courteous librarian who rules over the mute population of immortal tomes in *la Bibliotheque du Roi* has enabled us to consult in throwing together our story, gives this letter, with many marks of admiration and wonder at the striking and (the writer says, in a note) apparently improbable incidents which distinguished the attempt of this injured lady to regain her rights in behalf of her son, and to establish her own innocence. It informs us of a fact, that at the interview between Lady Beverly and Elkington, where this rash and wicked person, trained by the habitual indulgence of his passions, dared to strike even a woman—and that woman his mother, and where all that Lady Beverly knew of her history was revealed; it informs us that *Carl*, who, on having been dismissed by Claude, had been taken into the employ of Elkington, and who was all the time ensconced under the bed between two large portmanteaux, thus possessed himself of the whole history; and, having already read all Claude's letters, journals, &c., his active mind commenced examining

the subject as one worthy of his powers ; and at length, by a coincidence which would appear perfectly natural had we time to explain it, alighted upon the traces of Madame Wharton as being one of the characters in this game of blind-man's-buff. Thinking he might make a good affair of it, he communicated to Madame Wharton all he knew ; which so perfectly accorded with the thousand indications she had herself discovered, that she set off for London to institute inquiries and take the necessary measures. In this she had been baffled for a long time, occasioning much delay ; but at length, by great sagacity and prudence, and the aid of several distinguished auxiliaries, of whom the Marquis of E—— was one—by recovering from the heirs of Lord Perceval many of his private memoranda upon the history of Claude, which, from his likeness to his father, Lord Perceval had also suspected—in short, with Carl's evidence, and by an appeal to the young noble, Lord ——, who had, with Lady Beverly, been one of the instruments of her ruin, and who was now a gouty, bloated, bed-ridden old man, willing to purchase by any confession an exemption from the consequences which the revival of his youthful "follies" would bring upon him—in short, the whole history was made clear, that Lord Elkington and Lady Beverly had been all the while absent from London, the latter being too ill to travel ; that it wanted but the recovery of the earl to an hour's use of his senses to procure his recognition of an innocent wife and a lost son, both worthy of him. As if Fortune were loath to spoil such a fine train of affairs, the earl recovered in an unexpected manner, and was for several days in the full possession of his strength and clear reason. Our unpractised hand must not attempt to describe the *denouement*, nor relate the earl's emotions when convinced that he had committed a whole life of injustice by prematurely crediting a calumny ; and when he beheld once more in his presence her who had left him a radiant and tender girl, and pure as the dewy

rose, and who now appeared with the transformations of twenty years in her person. Many traces of that soft face, however, were preserved—for temperance and virtue are potent cosmetics; and their mutual recognition furnished a scene fitter for the inspired hand of Shakspeare than ours. Indeed, her visit to London would itself furnish forth an edifying romance. The lofty character and personal beauty of his son, when they were recounted to the earl in this brief but delicious interval between life and death, swelled his bosom with unutterable joy and a natural desire to behold him. But this was not to be gratified; for he had no sooner, in presence of the Marquis of E—— and several others of his ancient friends, freely and legally completed the arrangements necessary to the succession of Claude, and exchanged with his devoted wife a pardon which strewed the dismal path of death with roses, than the remorseless tyrant, who could wait no longer, suddenly laid his cold hand upon him; and Madame Wharton trembled to perceive that she had recovered the treasure so priceless and so long lost, only to behold it—for such is human joy—slip again and for ever from her grasp. Hence her triumph was sad, and her success so mixed with sorrow, that the dazzling revolution in her condition did not disturb the usual composure of her soul, or produce any remarkable change in her manners. A P.S. stated that the bearer was a confidential valet of the Marquis of E——, and that his honesty, knowledge, and discretion were to be implicitly trusted.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILE Claude was reading this long communication, the messenger, who had been despatched on the occasion as one capable of rendering the most requi-

site information and services under the present circumstances, had ascertained the debt for which his new master was imprisoned, and had sent to pay the same. Claude had not finished studying this deeply-interesting letter when the order arrived for his release. The man respectfully asked for his farther commands.

"Have the prisoners all assembled at once," said Claude, "and ascertain the aggregate amount of their debts."

A group of poor devils gathered around with awe-struck looks, for they had just learned that their fellow-prisoner was no less a personage than the Earl of Beverly, and as rich as the king. The sum of their debt was one hundred and eighty thalers. Some of them had been confined for eleven months.

"Pay them all," said Claude, "and give every man a five thaler note. Find out, also, an appropriate *café*, and order a good dinner for them to drink my health. Attend to this *first*."

The crowd of poor wretches, in their greasy sheep-skin *robes de chambre*, looked at each other and at the beneficent being who, as if fallen from heaven, had thus suddenly appeared among them. It was curious to observe the various effects which the announcement of their release had upon their respective deportments. Some stood stupified—some danced, leaped about, and shouted like madmen—some ran up to him, knelt, and kissed the hem of his coat—some broke out into fierce exclamations of delight, mingled with oaths—and one stood perfectly still, betraying his emotion only by his silent tears. It is possible that a portion of these worthy gentlemen would have done society quite as much service under lock and key as at large; but there were others who presented cases of homely but real misfortune. The poor fellow last alluded to, whose eyes filled with tears of gratitude and joy, Claude found had been imprisoned for one thaler the day before. He had left a sick, motherless child at home, and had

gone out to buy medicine, when his creditor laid hands on him, and, deaf to every prayer and explanation, threw him into prison.

Other proper donations were ordered, particularly to the good commissioner and the honest turnkey; and James, with that unalterable respect with which a good English servant always communicates with his master, touched his hat and stated that a carriage was ready, and that he had already procured apartments in a hotel for his *lordship*. As one in an enchanting dream, Claude took up his worn hat and prepared to bid adieu for ever to this dismal abode. As he reached the lower corridor, prisoners, turnkeys, commissioners, *gens d'armes*, were all ranged on either side to see him pass. Every hand was extended, every face was lighted with joy. No kingly palace in Europe showed a happier picture on that day, and many a one a more sad, than the medley of friends who greeted, with hearty tokens of respect and admiration, the now once more uplifted brow of our hero. As the doors opened, and a waft of fresh air came to his heated face, and the honest fellows saw a plain but very elegant carriage waiting, and their patron aided into it by his servant, the ordinary restrictions of the prison were forgotten alike by keeper and prisoner, and three cheers were given, again, again, and again, so that they had turned the corner before these vociferous ebullitions of triumph had died away.

Lost in astonishment, bewildered, and incredulous, and fearing each moment to awake and find around him the naked and blackened walls of a loathsome prison, which were to bury him, perhaps for life, from the blessed light of nature, Claude reached his hotel, ordered a warm bath, some linen, and his old tailor. He found that James had chosen the most fashionable hotel in the town, and selected the best apartments in it. He was, in fact, by a curious coincidence, in the very rooms formerly occupied by Elkington, and from which he had gone forth to the fatal encounter with

poor, poor Denham! and this presenting a new idea, he sat down and instantly wrote his London banker the name of that lady, and desired that she might be sought and supplied with what funds she might require. He wrote also to her. By this time his bath—a luxury he had not enjoyed for many a month—arrived, the men bringing it approaching him with profound salutations and distant awe. James ministered to him like an angel. He not only supplied all his slightest wishes before they were expressed, but he even suggested them before they were formed; and as if borne floating, without care or effort, on some enchanting tide, everything went exactly as it should. Everybody came exactly at the proper moment. The tailor had on hand, yet unsold, all his ample and elegant wardrobe. James himself was a barber, tailor, housekeeper, valet, courier, counsellor, and friend, all in one, and without ever presuming upon a smile or look of familiarity, or performing his innumerable and delightful services as other than the ordinary noiseless and delicate attentions of a thorough-bred English valet.

The bath was brought to his room. He was left alone. He sat down on a sofa with a singular feeling. He was now rich. The secret which had covered him with odium and sorrow was revealed. He was placed among the great and opulent of the earth. *Ida*, who loved him—all obstacles to their union were removed. His heart, like a goblet full to overflowing, trembled with the weight of its oppressive load. His past life—his loneliness—his abandonment—his prison—those dismal, filthy walls—those rude, coarse crowds among whom he had been thrust—his poverty—his anguish, came sweeping over him now in such a solemn and dark train of images—such phantoms of horror—such remorseless fiends, from whom he had been rescued by that unseen Hand whose aid he had invoked—all that despair and humiliation could not do, this moment of happiness effected; and, overcome with his

emotions, he laid his face in his hands—an agitation like an earthquake passed through his soul—shook the very foundations of his being—and tears, such as he had never shed before, rose to his eyelids and fell silently to the floor.

“And God grant,” he thought, as relieved by his tears, an exquisite sense of the reality and luxury of his new position came over him, “that it may never make my heart as hard and inflated as Carolan’s.”

Carolan! his mother! Ida! Thoughts pressed on him too soft, too daring, too dazzling. His unaccustomed mind could not receive them. They pained and oppressed by their brightness and magnitude. He turned from them, resolving to give the day to idleness, incapacitated as he was for any serious employment or meditation.

He had about half finished dinner when a waiter announced a stranger.

“But my lord is occupied,” said James.

Claude started—was he speaking of him?

“My lord is at *dinner!*” continued James.

“The gentleman *must* see his lordship!” said the man, in an under tone. “He says he is an old, dear friend.”

“Lavalle!” said Claude, with eager pleasure. “Show him in, James!”

And with a good deal of noise and in a perturbation of delight, hastening to him and embracing him with the liveliest marks of friendship, in rushed Thomson.

“My dear Wyndham! my dear, dear fellow! I beg you ten thousand pardons for interrupting your dinner—but old friends, you know! Thank God! I have found you at last. I have heard it all. I congratulate you, my dearest fellow—I do, upon my soul! I am the first—ain’t I? I have been travelling after you in a drosky. I went down to the prison—to the police. *Enfin vous voici!* I am the happiest dog in the world. But what’s the matter? You look ill—you look grave. *Allons!* Take a glass of Champagne.

Garçon, some wine! That will revive you. This is too much for your shattered nerves. *Dieu!* how I have felt for you!"

James stood motionless, but glanced his eye at his master.

"Pour him out a glass of wine, James," said Claude, coldly.

Thomson took it and drank it; but all its foaming inspiration could not counteract the effect of the cold courtesy with which Claude received him.

"What! *Comment!* *vous ne buvez pas, mon cher?* *Que diable!* What's the matter? I hope no ill news."

"Of a kind," said Claude, "which will prevent my enjoying the society of Mr. Thomson any longer; therefore I shall make no apology for depriving myself of it. James, show the gentleman down."

"*Comment!* Positively! *c'est de rigueur!* Well, I'll look in again. Don't think to get rid of me so easily, *mon cher*. Nothing I love better than old friends. *Adieu!* *Au revoir!* *à demain, mon enfant!* Don't come to the stairs. *Au revoir!*"

The next day—for the public journals had given the news, although erroneously in many particulars, yet correctly in the general outline—carriage after carriage came thundering to the door, and a regiment of chas-seurs, with a perfect shower of cards. Claude had left orders to be out. As each card was brought in upon a silver salver, by a white-gloved domestic, to him who yesterday was on the point of starving in a jail for a thaler! Claude saw, with that quiet contempt which the conduct of many people is calculated to inspire for human nature, that they who had been most marked in their slights of him in the moment of his downfall, and who had not recognised him even when he spoke to them, were now among the first to call; but he saw also, with a bounding heart, the names of many whom he sincerely esteemed and loved, and who had been the same to him in all things, whether

prosperity shone on him, or dark misfortune lowered around his head. He was now on an eminence whence he could choose his friends; and he resolved, while he was courteous to all, and while he laid aside every thought of retaliation against those who had exposed their meanness and folly (except, indeed, individuals who, like Thomson, had been offensive by their impertinence), that he would cherish with sincerity those gentle and refined hearts whose sweetness and purity had been tasted when they could never expect any return.

The poor old woman with whom he had lodged claimed his attention, and he settled on her a small but sufficient annuity. He returned in haste the calls of his brilliant friends, who once more sought him with new avidity. He made friendly visits to a few families whom he really found worthy of lasting friendship. He spent a long evening with the good Mr. Kühl, whose respect for him almost interfered with his friendship, and who could call him nothing but "mon-seigneur." A few days were occupied on these matters. He had written daily to his *mother*; and could we present to the reader those effusions of his soul, now for the first time giving vent to affections which had been so long pent up in its hidden recesses, they would be found interesting specimens of his mind and nature. James proposed that they should set out immediately for London; but then first learned, with a consternation which he could not conceal, that his young master had determined to go directly to France.

"But your lordship does not know, perhaps," said James, "that France is in the whirl of a revolution which threatens to swallow up thousands, without discrimination of rank or innocence. The Marquis of E—— is informed distinctly on the subject. If you venture within the precincts of that unhappy country, you will never escape alive. You are an Englishman, and the slightest tinge in your accent will betray you to the guillotine. Your rank and fortune will make

you but a more conspicuous mark. Your death is as certain, my lord, as if you walked into the crater of a volcano. It is infatuation—it is madness. No one can live there without continual danger. The very king is trembling for his life. I beg, I implore you to abandon your design. Nothing but a conviction that I am pleading for your life could make me so free in addressing your lordship.”

“My good James,” said Claude, “I may confide to you the secret that a valued friend is almost alone and defenceless in the midst of these dangers, which you depict, I do not doubt, without exaggeration. It is true that my hope of even finding her is vague—of rescuing her is more so; but I am resolved to try.”

“Her?” said James; “a lady! Then I fear it is all over with us.”

“I may add, that she is one in whom Madame—in whom my *mother* is as much interested as I. You must prepare everything for my departure to-morrow morning.”

“Your lordship will excuse me from accompanying you farther than the frontier, because I regard going farther as certain death.”

“Certainly,” said Claude; “I shall go alone and immediately.”

James said no more, but shook his head ominously.

The next evening there was a grand *soirée chez le Prince R.* A strong curiosity prevailed to see the young hero, whom fortune appeared to have rewarded so munificently for his firm adherence to a principle. The cause of Elkington’s persecutions was now perfectly clear. Claude’s courage once established, as it had been by his brave deportment in the affair of Rossi and Ida, his previous forbearance was found sublime; and every one longed to greet him, and to repair by their attentions their former neglect. The assembly was crowded and brilliant in the extreme; and many a beautiful toilet was arranged with additional care at the thoughts that this now distinguished young noble-

man was to behold it. The disappointment and surprise were great when it was understood that he had that morning left town for *Paris*!

“Ah Dieu!” was the general exclamation. “*Il faut du courage pour ça!*”

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was on the fifth of August, in the year 1792, that Claude entered Paris. James had left him at the frontier, and expressed his determination to remain at Nymeguen during his sojourn in France, with a supply of money to be sent in case of need, though he presaged the most fearful difficulties and perils from his present undertaking. The best arrangements which his cool head and great experience in matters connected with the Continent—for he had been many years a courier, and spoke the French and German as well as the English—the best arrangements he could make were speedily agreed upon between them. A man was employed—a trusty and perfectly confidential Frenchman, by name Adolphe, long known to James—to remain with him at Nymeguen, that, in case of need, he might be the messenger between them. An ample remuneration was offered him should he be successful in his task. Of his fidelity there was no doubt. Some plain clothes, such as were worn by the most violent republicans of France, were procured for Claude; and it was determined—for his accent would have scarcely betrayed the foreigner—that he should pass for a Frenchman at any risk, and one fully infected with the revolutionary views. The address of a man perfectly known to Adolphe, resident in Paris, who could be applied to in emergency, and who could probably supply what money was desired, was also

given. Thus prepared, with 100 Louis in his pocket, a complete French Jacobin in costume, ready to meet any peril, our young adventurer set forth on his search after Carolan and Ida, determined never to abandon the pursuit while the smallest possibility remained of rendering them service.

He entered Paris in the morning. The day was fair, and imparted a singular beauty to the picturesque streets and tall houses of this celebrated metropolis. His first step was to visit Count la Tour, to whom he had a particular letter of introduction in Berlin, as one likely to know something of the now mysterious fate of Carolan and his daughter. On his way to the residence of this person, he was struck with the singular aspect of the town. This great city always awakens the attention of the newly-arrived by its striking forms, its streets, its dense, crowded lines of high houses, its salient points and angles—here steeped in sunshine, there merged in heavy shadow. Amid the heavy, grotesque, interminable masses through which the narrow streets open on every side, in lines straight, circular, serpentine, accustomed for some days to silent hills, open plains, and green and tranquil woods, Claude, although perfectly acquainted with Paris, felt himself a little bewildered. But it was the character of the population that now filled the streets which made his heart tremble for the fate of those in whom he was deeply interested. It was far different from that which usually imparted an air of gayety and enjoyment to the most charming metropolis in the world. Hordes of ruffians were seen lurking around, and bands of women half clothed, having on their countenances the marks of debauchery and evil passions. These debased creatures had an air of insolence which betrayed how weak was the usual municipal authority, and how secure they felt themselves in the exercise of whatever dissoluteness or misdemeanours they might choose to be guilty of. They shouted, hooted, whooped, and communicated with each other by all kinds of uncouth

noises and obscene gestures. It was at once apparent to Claude, that some convulsion either had happened or was about to take place, for the population presented that appearance observable when any violent shock passes over a large town, causing a kind of chymical separation of the constituent parts of society—the reputable classes disappearing to the shelter of their own houses, while the profligate and abandoned appear from their dark lurking-places in the light of day. These ruffians wore filthy jackets, large coarse trousers, and red flannel caps. Many were equipped with girdles furnished with pistols, dirks, and enormous knives. He saw, with a new horror, that this rude costume, by its general adoption, was not an accidental dress, but a kind of uniform, assumed for, he shuddered to conjecture what dreadful enterprise. Never before had he beheld a collection of such hideous and formidable beings, and their manner was as ominous as their appearance. Some stalked by him with scowling and ferocious countenances. Some wore that kind of smile which a ruffian wears when he feels that he may perpetrate with impunity the worst of crimes. Of these not a few appeared to act the part of guides and leaders, whispering about the mob, giving sometimes weapons, and sometimes drink and money. The under fiends of the revolution were here doing their work.

Making his way through these crowds, and not unfrequently regarded with a scrutiny which would have made most men quail, sometimes rudely addressed with a rough jest or a rough slap on the back, he reached the house of the Count *de la Tour*—the friend of Carolan.

“I wish to see Monsieur le Comte de la Tour,” said Claude to the porter.

“If you mean the *Citizen La Tour*,” was the surly reply, “you’ll find him up stairs.”

The domestic who opened the door of the *Citizen La Tour*’s apartment eyed the new-comer narrowly before he admitted him.

Claude requested to speak at once with the count, and in private.

He was admitted, gave his letter, and related the object of his visit.

"My friend," said La Tour, when he had finished, "have you any idea of the things which are going on here just now?"

"I see something dreadful is going to happen," said Claude, "but I am determined not to turn back."

The Citizen La Tour looked cautiously around, and said,

"Excuse my frankness, my young friend; but, in my opinion, you are as little acquainted with France as the world. Carolan—Citizen Carolan—we have no more counts now—is in prison—in the *Conciergerie*—whence he will no more escape with his head than you would if you were to make the slightest inquiry after him, to say nothing of an attempt to see him."

"Great Heaven! are you in earnest?"

"As you will be if you stay here another week. *Save him?* say you! *Save yourself,* and that forthwith. Your design is wild, dangerous, and impossible. What tie binds you to such a perilous scheme? The man is an ass of the first water. His head is too empty to be worth saving. He thrust it, like a fool, into the lion's jaws. Many a better one is doomed to fall before this coil is finished."

"May I ask after his daughter?" demanded Claude.

"Ah—so! there is a girl, I remember."

"Have you seen her?"

"Yes—a pretty creature! She is with the queen at the palace. It was managed, I know not how, by the friends of the royal family, that she should be received nominally as a *compagnon* of her majesty till the danger is over."

"Then she is *safe!*" said Claude.

"Sorry to chase that extremely interesting expression of pleasure," said La Tour, laughing; "but she

is in more danger in the palace, in my opinion, than she would be in the meanest hut in France."

"You cannot mean—" said Claude.

"Yes, I *do* mean the *worst*. Where are you lodged?"

"At the little Hotel de France, in the *section du Theatre Français*."

"Ah—the devil! You are in the very centre of the *Cordeliers*. Take my advice, young gentleman; abandon your hair-brained scheme, and leave your pretty countess to take care of herself. These are no times for Quixotic expeditions, and there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it!"

"No, I shall remain; and I am happy to have found from you the information I desired. Can I by no means be permitted to see the count, or the young Countess Carolan?"

"No—impossible! Communication is carefully guarded. If you are resolved to follow the silly example of your friend, and wait till they come to truss you like a fowl, take my advice—it is all I can give you. In France, at present, there is but one crime. It is being *suspected* of opposing the revolution. They are all mad. The *nation* is a lunatic. Don't trifle with it. If you cannot escape from it, humour it."

"I have faced one lunatic," said Claude, quietly, "and I will not shrink from another. I shall stay."

"Well, then, live plainly—meanly, if possible—make no acquaintances—no confidences—say nothing—burn all letters—write nothing—shout '*Vive la Revolution!*' and '*à bas le Roi!*'—watch every look and action—don't breathe an opinion—don't even whistle a tune. Three of my friends, who were to have fled to-morrow, lie this instant in a dungeon, from which they will never escape alive, because a *parrot* in the house in which they lived cried '*Vive le Roi!*'* Beware of any expressions of sympathy—any impulses of

* A fact.

disgust, horror, or disapprobation. There is a danger beneath, around, and above you. Distrust everybody — your landlord — your friend — your servant. The whole town are *spies*; and if you see my head to-morrow morning carried by your window on a pike, don't frown, or murmur, or even start. Let no one know who you are. Become a beggar in attire and a Jacobin in deportment."

"Are things indeed so desperate?" said Claude, greatly alarmed for the success of his enterprise.

"You cannot escape," continued La Tour, "but by seeming to abet the revolution. Shout for the nation! and the republic! Down with the veto! Down with the Austrian! *Vive Danton! Vive Petion! Vive Santerre!*"

A hoarse shout from the street here broke upon their interview.

"Let us see what this is," said La Tour.

They walked to the window. Cries of "*à la lanterne! à la lanterne!*" were now audible, and were mingled with the heavy tramping of a thousand feet. The mob were dragging to a lamp just opposite an unhappy young man, livid with terror, by a rope around his neck. He struggled, strove to kneel, and screamed, but his voice was drowned in shouts. He was thrust to the fatal spot, and the cord thrown over the crosspiece.

"Let us save him!" cried Claude. "This is horrible!" and he was about to throw up the window.

La Tour drew him forcibly back.

"Are you mad? Have you already forgotten? A pretty fellow for a revolution! Save him, indeed! ha! ha! ha! Leave him to his fate. Bless your simple heart, this is nothing new! This is of daily—ha!—hark!"

They listened.

A hoarse and deafening shout, mingled with screams and peals of laughter, were heard.

"Hark! Poor devil! he's off already! Hark again!—ah! the bloodhounds!"

"How can he have merited this horrible fate?" exclaimed Claude.

"Merited? Why, very likely by turning pale, as you do, at some similar scene! You are but poorly fitted for your wise scheme if this trifle makes you change colour. I have seen so much of this sort of thing that I am quite used to it, and have no other sentiment than a secret self-congratulation that *I* am not in the poor wretch's place—that my turn has not come *yet!* ha! ha! ha!"

"Why don't you escape?" demanded Claude.

"I dare not. Their eye is upon me; and, by-the-way, I wish you wouldn't come here again. I am afraid of you. You are so extremely unsophisticated. That whey-face of yours will get itself into trouble, and its friends too. I'll call on you at your hotel; and, if you wish, I can get you a passport to accompany a division of the army to the frontier; I have that influence yet; and, once there, you can escape easily."

"No," said Claude; "what I have seen only makes me more determined not to abandon my friends."

"Well, you're a brave fellow! but—excuse my freedom—you'll regret the refusal of my offer before a month. This is no child's play. They're in earnest—these fellows. As for the king and queen, and all around them—ah! parbleu!"

"What of them? What *can* happen to place them in danger? What have they to fear?"

"Hark—in your ear—" and even La Tour turned pale as he leaned his head forward and whispered,

"*The scaffold, mon cher!*"

Claude started, the blood curdling in his veins with astonishment and horror.

"You are mad!" said he, sternly, "or you are trifling with my fears."

"All earth—all heaven can't save them. Don't I know?—haven't I seen?—am I a fool? *par exemple!* And you—you, who can't hear of these things without turning white behind your ears—what can you do but

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fly—if, indeed, it be not already too late for that? I like your spirit, though. You're a brave fellow, and, if you wish, I'll save you by the means I spoke of."

"What!" said Claude, sadly but firmly, "leave those I most love to the *scaffold*? Turn from them in the last hour of deadly danger? No, sir. If you can help me to speak with her, or to a place in his majesty's palace—for I hope this tragedy won't be witnessed *passively* by the people of France—I shall thank you; if not—adieu."

"You are mad!" said La Tour. "Go your own way. But shake hands. I never do so now to a friend without feeling as if one of us was at the foot of the guillotine. I have an appointment—adieu! May we meet again! and, egad—who knows!"

Claude left La Tour, scarcely able to reconcile the heartless levity of his conversation with the real services he had offered, and at the same time resolving to adopt such part of his counsel as related to his residence in Paris. He walked with hasty steps towards the garden of the Tuileries, resolving the best means of announcing his presence to Ida, and of taking measures for the escape of herself and father—a task hopeless to all but such a lover as he. Such an entire *bouleversement* had taken place in society, that he knew not a single person to whom he could apply for aid or information. As he advanced he found the crowds becoming more dense, and a general gloom, agitation, and ferocity pervaded them. Many a dark brow and eye met his sight, cast around, some in apprehension, and some in search of danger. On reaching the garden of the Tuileries, he saw that a large mob was collected in front of the royal chateau. They consisted of the same desperate class of wretches he had already seen, mingled with the most disgusting-looking women he had ever beheld; and deep were the execrations—the obscene jests—the dark threats, and the facetious shouts which were directed by these formidable vagabonds at the royal chateau and its un-

happy inmates, and particularly at the unfortunate queen. Here again obscenity appeared a favourite weapon ; and the gross insults directed against a female figure which appeared a moment at a window, and was generally believed to be *Marie Antoinette*, but which Claude's high beating heart fancied the beloved object of his search, caused the lady, whoever she might be, to withdraw immediately.

"Come forth! execrable vulture with your Austrian beak!" cried a hoarse, deep voice, elevated as of an orator above all the noises of the crowd, which in some measure disposed itself to listen. "Your doom is written! *The people—the people* are up! That high head shall be laid low!"

"No, by Brutus!" cried another. "We will raise it higher than ever pride and insolent ambition reared it—on a *pike! mes enfans!*"

These sallies were received with tumultuous approbation. When the noises had subsided, the first speaker, who had raised himself on some object answering as a stage, began, in the same deep and powerful voice, to address the crowd. His speech was couched in a wild, declamatory language, and a part of it ran in this fashion:

"The good work goes well, my friends!" he said. "The *people* are up and doing. The tyrants tremble. Their feet shall be no more on your neck!"

A shout of triumph from the auditory here interrupted him. Claude regarded this new advocate of national rights with interest. His appearance obviously announced an extraordinary person. He was of a gigantic stature, a heavy, burly, and ferocious countenance, a voice of singular depth and power, and altogether a striking representative and leader of a rabble, who apparently knew him, and regarded his wild and reckless style of eloquence with great admiration.

"People of France!" continued the orator, "your oppressors are about to fly from you. The public functionaries are abandoning the country. They are fright-

ened. Every day emigrants are flowing out of France. What for? To excite all Europe against her. To come back and bathe these streets and gardens with your blood. Let no more traitors pass the frontier. Punish the *thought* of emigration with *death*! Crush the spirit—the power of opposition. Let us *decapitate* all who hate our glorious revolution—all who, from their birth, education, character, or position, are likely to oppose it. They who are not for, are against us. Let him die who ever *speaks* of *mercy*. Let the word be the signal of death, or it will render the bold bolder, and the strong stronger. This is a struggle between two powers, wherein one or the other must be *exterminated*. We must destroy our destroyers, or be destroyed ourselves. The king, *Louis Capet*, is leaguering with foreign courts. He wishes to inundate France with foreign troops. Will you have Austrian and Prussian bayonets at your doors and at your throats? Let us speak to the king—to his ministers—to Europe—to mankind, with firmness and with decision. The *revolution* or *death*! We have drawn the sword, let us cast away the scabbard. We have tried all means to redress our rights. We have tried persuasion—threats—entreaties—demands. We have tried reason—we have tried submission—we have tried peace. It was all in vain. And now we are up, and hurrah for war! for death! It is but once in a thousand years that a great people rise together to vindicate the dignity of the human race. When they do so, there is but one means—war! war! war! War against external, and yet more against internal foes. War with the sword and dagger—with the pike and cannon—with the *lanterne* and the guillotine—for the hour has come!”

His voice broke into a hoarse shriek, which was caught up and echoed by the momentarily increasing crowd with a phrensy and delight.

“The cabinet of Vienna,” continued the speaker, “have fifty thousand men in the Low Countries—six

thousand are posted in the Bregaw—thirty thousand are despatched from Bohemia. France is threatened with the fate of Poland. A Prussian army is at this instant upon her sacred territory, marching towards Paris—towards your homes, your wives, your children!”

Claude’s heart sunk in his bosom as he heard this high prophet of wo, and beheld the fearful power with which he lashed the passions of his auditors.

“Who is the *cause* of this?” continued the speaker. “Behold yonder building! *There* lies the cause of all your oppressions. But for *that*, there would be bread and pleasures enough for all. The king—the queen—their family—their household! They are *all* joining with foreign foes to trample you into the dust. There is a great—*great* deed to be done! We must put our heel upon the vipers. The kings of Europe threaten us. Let us hold up to them, in answer, *the head of a king!!!*”

It is impossible to paint the frantic and fierce delight with which this discourse was received by its terrible auditory. The orator beheld their delirium with a placid, good-humoured face and a gratified smile. His gestures were calm and almost dignified. He would have proceeded farther, but at this moment a company of the National Guard were observed to issue from a wing of the chateau, and to make their way at a rapid step towards the crowd. The commanding officer’s voice could not be heard, but he motioned with his sword and addressed those within hearing, forming his company into three divisions, so as to present a formidable front of bristling muskets, which threatened to shower death upon the furious but imperfectly armed mob, who at first showed signs of determined resistance.

“Not yet,” said the deep voice of the speaker, before he descended from his chair. “Go to your homes! Not yet, *mes enfans!* The hour is approaching, but it is not quite arrived.”

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Partly influenced by this caution, but probably in a much greater degree by the nearer sight of the troops, who, at the command of their officer, made ready and presented their muskets, the throngs opened and parted in every direction, dispersing into the adjoining streets and squares. They were followed by the soldiers, and cries of "Back! back! Fools! *coquins!* *nigecauds!* back!" and frequent blows with the flat blades of their swords hastened their retreat and added to the general confusion.

Claude did not join this rabble in their flight, but remained, and was presently overtaken by a small company.

"Have you a mind to a bullet for your supper, young man," said the officer, "that you do not follow your companions?"

"They are not my companions, sir," said Claude; "my friends lie within yonder walls; and I'll make it worth your trouble if you'll help me to gain entrance into the chateau."

"How now, fool!" said the officer; "you must be mad, or worse, to think of such a thing; and if you wish not rather to take up your abode in less elegant lodgings, you'll keep away from this part of the town. Back! monsieur. Back! I say!"

"I protest! I entreat! I will give you any sum to carry a letter for me," said Claude. "It is to a lady—one of the—"

"Back!" said the officer; "he is mad or an assassin."

And, indeed, the earnestness and agitation of Claude's looks and gestures went far to sanction this opinion, which soon received a still stronger confirmation.

The orator of the day, lurking behind a tree, was identified by a soldier as he who had just addressed the crowd. Two men were despatched to seize him.

When they returned, all present seemed to recognise the person of the speaker.

“What, George!” said the officer, with an expression of deep indignation, “is it you again at this work? Shame upon you. I have a mind to—to—”

“To what?” said the giant, calmly.

“To drag you to the dungeon which you and such as you deserve.”

“And where have you walls thick enough to keep out those who would come to seek me?” demanded the stranger.

“Parbleu!” said the young soldier, reddening with anger, “do you threaten one of his majesty’s officers?”

“Yes, threaten and defy him!” replied the stranger, sternly, and yet with a certain dignity.

“Had I *my* will, I would put you in such a cell as would baffle all the bloodhounds who come at your call to get you out!” said the soldier. “It would be only by the hand of the executioner that I would have that rebellious head of yours shown to the people—as one day it will be, if I have any skill in prophecy.”

“Dog of a hireling!” said the stranger, fiercely, “do you know that not only *your* head, but your master’s, shall one day—”

He was interrupted by a cry of fury from the soldiers; and the officer, himself apparently suffering rage for an instant to get the better of reason, with a deep execration, gave the word of command to his men, who scarcely waited for it; they levelled their muskets at the stranger, who, as if appalled at the consequences of his words, turned pale, and exhibited other signs of trepidation. The officer was in the act of pronouncing the word “Fire!” when Claude, with an irresistible impulse to save at any risk the shedding of human blood in cold cruelty, stepped actually before the levelled muskets, and entreated the amazed soldier to forbear.

“For the love of Heaven, sir,” said he, “as you value the lives of the king and royal family, do not fire! One drop of blood at this moment will destroy the

chateau and all its inhabitants, and drench Paris in blood."

"Eh! parbleu!" cried the officer, regarding this bold intrusion with irrepressible astonishment; "are you seeking a grave, that you put yourself before loaded muskets in that way? Had I but breathed a word, you would have been by this time in company with Cæsar. Is *yon nigeaud* your *father*, that you think his life worth so much more than your own?"

"No, I do not know him," replied Claude; "but I think your position requires prudence, and no blood should be spilled on the king's side. It would raze Paris to the ground."

"Well, well, you may be right! but, *sacré diable!* you're a bold *ganache!* Adieu, monsieur! and a word of advice. When next you meet a line of muskets levelled at a *scélérat* like this, after the words 'make ready' and 'take aim' have been uttered, don't be too ready to step before them. Every officer may not be as cool as I, and they *might* fire—eh! Ha! ha! ha! par Dieu! that's capital! *Allons, messieurs!*"

The troops now drew together again, and, being formed into a single company by the principal officer, were wheeled round and marched back towards the chateau.

"Bold friend!" said the Herculean stranger, drawing near, "you have saved my life. I may, perhaps, one day reciprocate the favour. Who are you?"

"My name can be of little interest to you, monsieur," said Claude, coolly.

"Possibly! but it may be different with mine, in regard to yourself, young man. Therefore please to remember it, and, when you need aid—as doubtless you will, for the times are somewhat unsettled, and I think your tongue smacks of an accent not loved in Paris—call on *me*, and be assured I will not fail you. You have saved the life of *Danton*. I am to be heard of at the *Jacobin*. *Au revoir! mon cher.*"

The stranger turned on his heel and walked hastily away.

CHAPTER XXV.

ALL the efforts of Claude to gain an entrance into the chateau, or to obtain any communication with the inhabitants of it, were in vain. He was obliged to use the utmost caution in making the endeavour, and he more than once subjected himself to serious danger in the attempt.

Some days passed away in this state of suspense, which grew every moment more awful. The most frightful reports were continually in circulation. It was said the town was to be sacked—there was to be a rising of the mob—the chateau was to be burned, and the royal family and household massacred. The tumult and alarm each day augmented. Some dreadful event was clearly impending. The crisis was at hand.

It was on the afternoon before the memorable 10th of August, that, having snatched a hasty meal, and equipped himself, as every one else had done, with pistols and a sabre, Claude left his lodging with the full determination to make his way to the chateau, and to be first in the attack which, it was understood, was to be made upon it, so that, gaining entrance with the mob, he might seek and save Ida, if, indeed, she had not long since escaped from it. All his exertions could procure for him no other chance of admission. As he attempted to make his way towards the Tuileries, he found the streets thronged with crowds of the worst description. The shops were closed. Business was entirely abandoned. Only wild hordes of women and ruffians, whose actions gave evidences, not to be mistaken, of an immediate outbreak.

It was late in the day when he left his lodgings, and the shadows of night soon descended upon one of the

most frightful scenes recorded by history. The uproar increased, and, with feelings which we shall not undertake to depict, he perceived the tide set towards the chateau. Suddenly a tremendous pressure, in which some of the more feeble were trampled to death around him, required him to exert all his strength to escape the same fate. He succeeded with difficulty in mounting the steps of a church, and it would be difficult to describe the emotions with which, from this eminence, he beheld approaching, with that kind of solemn grandeur which always attends the exhibition of immense power, an organized body of about thirty thousand persons, consisting of the most desperate men and dissolute and frantic women—the mere refuse of human nature. Some children were distinguished in this formidable battalion, and, fearfully indicative of the extent of the revolutionary fury, many of the National Guards swelled the rank of the enemy they should have confronted. Few regular arms, however, were seen; but countless hands bore with a firm grasp whatever chance had thrown in their way—axes, poles, scythes, pitchforks, clubs, spears, and butcher's knives. Hundreds of torches threw a lurid glare upon the scene, rendering it at once more picturesque and awful; and, at short intervals of distance, and waved wildly in the smoky light, were lifted banners displaying inscriptions of the various revolutionary watchwords most in vogue, such as *Down with the Veto!* *Death to the Austrian!* *Long live the Sans Culottes!* *The country in danger!* and, *The nation for ever!*

This dreadful army came up and passed on with a measured tread, that sounded like the rumbling of a volcano about to burst—the unbridled and clamorous fury of individual passion having subsided into a general current, more silent only because more deep. Suddenly they broke out, as if with a simultaneous impulse, into the chorus "*ça-ira!*" The blended voices of so many thousands—their irregular and terrible arms—their garb of rags, filth, and desperate wretched-

ness—their haggard and ferocious faces—and the deep, hollow tramp with which those determined feet—bent to the throne of their king—kept time to the music, made a scene which would have appalled a heart less stout than Claude's. It seemed, indeed, the whole nation gathered together in gigantic force, and rolling, in one stupendous billow, to sweep away the solid banks which had pent it up for ages.

Different indeed were the feelings and intentions which animated Claude from those which, perhaps with scarcely a single exception, inspired the dreadful masses of desperate beings around him, and deep was the horror and disgust with which he beheld their slow, but determined, portentous advance; but he saw no other chance of effecting his purpose than joining their ranks, and accordingly he fell in, his drawn sabre in hand, and pursued his march. He well knew their path and his own were the same. In this way he succeeded in getting much nearer the scene where centred so many of his hopes and fears.

It was his intention to follow this army of desperadoes to the very gate of the chateau; but an accident prevented him. A female, whose appearance was that of a fury, finding him in her way, suddenly thrust him violently forward, and on his turning to defend himself from the second blow, she raised a glittering knife, as if to anticipate his resentment by making the first fatal attack. In the astonishment excited by this incident, Claude's foot slipped, and he would have received, without being able to parry it, the descending stroke of this half-drunken pythoness, and fallen only to be trampled to death beneath the multitude, which no such trifle could an instant arrest in its course, when a third person extended his scythe so as to fend the thrust, and hastily, at the same time, reaching his hand, sustained him in a perpendicular position. There are kind hearts in the lowest scenes. He was, however, thus pressed out of the ranks, and, breathless and fatigued, he was obliged to rest among a group which,

motionless itself, beheld this portentous tide flow by. The regiment from which he had been thus excluded passed on, and, unaccustomed as he was to such violent exercise, he was glad to stop a moment and recover breath.

This terrible body had scarcely passed, when it was followed by several companies of grenadiers—and legions of licentious vagabonds, at first entirely without order or arms, but who received the latter as they proceeded from hands careful to supply them, without fee or question, wherever they were wanted. From these frightful crowds ever and anon rose a kind of half-chanted chorus, which had the most solemn and almost sublime effect, of "*Bread ! bread ! bread !*"

Suddenly the deep report of a cannon sent an electric shock through the stormy sea of human beings heaving around. Then the drums beat far and wide the terrible *générale*, and from all quarters rose shouts, fierce and universal, "*To the palace ! To the palace !*"

This was the long-expected signal for the attack on the chateau.

Claude—his blood boiling, his mind greatly excited by the scenes he had passed through—pressed his way on, resolved to reach the scene of the attack at any hazard, certain that, if these hellhounds forced admission into the royal residence, every member of the family would be instantly massacred, unless the friends of the king should have gathered around him, at this dark hour, in sufficient numbers to make a resistance, and should have foreseen the necessity of preparing in an adequate manner to defend their position. Bold and firm measures would certainly have afforded a hope of safety. The cool skill of a disciplined militia—a determined resistance—a resolution to defend the royal residence inch by inch, and to the last drop of blood, supported by even a tolerable force, might check the onset—give time for the royalists to rally around their sovereign, till the fickle multitude should abandon

their bloody purpose. Had these requisite arrangements been made, Claude knew that every accession to the besieged would be of fearful importance, and that the fate of the contest might be turned even by a single arm. He pictured the unfortunate and excellent, but wavering, monarch and his beautiful queen awaiting in horror this appalling attack ; and Ida, pale with terror, calling perhaps on him for aid, which she little dreamed he had thus promptly determined to offer. Deeply did he yearn, during that midnight march amid the most remorseless and bloodthirsty wretches that ever gathered to a scene of carnage and crime, to be planted in front of the almost defenceless circle which they were hastening to attack. No tempest-tossed mariner ever sighed more eagerly for land, than he for the moment when he might throw himself before the king and her who was now trembling at his side, and when he might oppose even his single breast to this awful danger. He had been denounced as a coward for shrinking from doing what he deemed *wrong*, and he could be driven neither by anger nor false shame to violate his principle, and to break the law of man and God. Among those who sneered at and despised him, was there one heart that would have remained more unappalled in this scene ? one foot that would have more steadily pursued its way where humanity, chivalry, and love called him ?

After breathing a few moments, and feeling that his arms were safe, his pistols firm in his girdle, and his poniard in his bosom, grasping his sword with a prayer to Heaven for success, he stepped from his resting-place, and committed himself once more to the swift current which rushed towards the fated chateau. He soon found that his principal danger lay in the effect of the now momentarily increasing excitement of the scene upon his mind. He could scarcely restrain his disgust and indignation within the bounds of prudence, or wait the proper moment to strike a blow in defence of the weaker party. It was only the image

of Ida—pale—pursued perhaps by ruffians, and consigned to dangers too horrible to dwell on—that gave him power to govern the impetuosity of his soul—to repress his mounting passions, and to check the arm that longed to deal death among the fierce and brutal wretches who howled around him for the blood of the noble, the innocent, and helpless. But for long habits of self-control, he would probably have here sacrificed his life at once, without the slightest advantage to the cause he espoused. Guarding himself with a powerful effort from a premature discovery of his intention, and making his way on and on with unwavering perseverance and the most unshrinking disregard of such dangers as could not be avoided, he struck through the masses of the tumultuous rabble, who, supposing that the tall and determined man—grasping his sabre as one who meant to use it well, and advancing through all obstacles with such a reckless energy—was one of those acting as their leaders, made way for him on every side. His form, indeed, was one that commanded attention. His hat had long since fallen. His hair was streaming wildly about his head, and the deep emotion of his soul had imparted to his demeanour a commanding dignity, and to his face a sternness, for which he had been in some degree remarked even in the glittering scenes of fashion, but which at this hour spoke like one born to command, and whom it was not safe to resist. Yes, he who had been able to endure *a blow*, and all its humiliating consequences, rather than violate a principle, now disclosed, perhaps half unexpectedly to himself, the soul of a hero—cool and self-governed in the midst of such shocking and perilous scenes as the world have rarely witnessed, without a shudder at the death-shrieks which often arose around him—now of some wretch suspended to a lamp-post at his side, now the wild cry of some woman fainting and trampled to a shapeless clod beneath his feet—and without the slightest disturbance of his calmness, although pressing on and on amid weap-

ons which he knew must be presently directed against himself, and expecting each instant as he advanced—*hoping*, indeed—to be rewarded by a discharge of cannon—which might rake the narrow and crowded streets from end to end, and greet the besiegers with such a reception as they deserved. He felt his soul exalted with emotions never known before. He grew more and more calm and resolute, and deeper and deeper every moment grew the burning impatience of his soul, to find the occasion when he might abandon the ranks of his bloodthirsty companions, and, throwing himself by the side of the other party—of Ida, perhaps—aid in checking the attack, or yield his life in the attempt.

But alas! one individual in a scene like this is but an atom; and, the nearer he approached the central scene, the more he was hemmed in, and deprived of power over his own motions. He was borne slowly onward, as a plank upon the billows; and, long before he came in sight of the Tuileries, in an agony of suspense to know whether any attack could have been made already, without, perhaps, any defence, the morning had filled the east, and the smoky flambeaux began to grow pale before her pure light.

At length he reached a point whence the chateau was visible; and he perceived, with inexpressible exultation, not only that the attack had not commenced, but that it was to be met with a manly defence. Battalions of the National Guard were marched up to the chateau. The *gend'armerie* followed on horseback. Various appearances indicated that the besieged had not abandoned hope; and that the besiegers, great as were their strength and numbers, would not advance farther on their enterprise without some hesitation.

On looking in another direction, however, it was seen that the insurgents were swelled each hour by new accessions, and were steadily advancing in several columns. Even while Claude reconnoitred them, a large body of the wildest rabble—who had just forced the

arsenal, and thus completely equipped themselves with arms—approached in regular order, showing that they were acting under cool and able leaders. They were received with reiterated shouts of triumph. They were followed almost immediately by another column fifteen or twenty thousand strong, and then by another of equal force. As the strength of the assailants received their augmentations, the air was rent with universal bursts of triumph, in which the name of each body was the burden, "Hurrah! Victory! The *faubourg St. Antoine!* The *faubourg St. Marceau!!*!"

And now the assailants were drawn up in the order in which they were to advance to the attack. The clamour of the crowd for a moment abated before the intense interest of the scene. A burst of music was heard. A company of the *Marsellaise* moved forward in perfect order. Claude had placed himself as near the front ranks as he could get—a position for him of double peril; for, while he thus exposed himself to the fire of the besieged, he ran the hazard of being cut down or shot by his own party the instant he should discover his intention of joining their victims. The guards of the palace appeared crowded at the doors and windows. The assailants advanced at first with some show of order. Suddenly a single musket fired from a window laid the man next to Claude dead beneath his feet. A general discharge followed instantly from both sides, and then all was smoke—crash—fire—shrieks—shouts—thunder, and such confusion as rendered it almost impossible to know in which direction lay the chateau. His ears were deafened—his clothes blackened and burnt—a ball had passed through his sleeve, and he had a slight cut upon the arm, which he only knew some time afterward by the sight of the flowing blood. Borne, as a struggling sailor in a shipwreck, by the waves, he found himself at length, with a firm footing, immediately before the palace. His heart leaped to perceive that he was among the first. There were heavy blows, and crash after crash, and peals of

cannon shook the earth, and the bullets whizzed close to his head. As the breeze blew away the smoke, he perceived that he was in the midst of the maddened soldiery, doing their dreadful work upon the poor Swiss, who, fighting to the last, yielded their bosoms and their throats to each red and ruthless hand. He threw himself into the midst of them to save a poor fellow who was set on by four or five ruffians, and who fought like a lion. Claude rushed to his side. The impulse which seized him was irresistible as madness. He fired, and the foremost of the assailants fell. It was the first time he had ever taken human life, and he experienced a thrill as the poor wretch tumbled back and the blood gushed from his head and nostrils; but there was no compunction in his feelings, and the next assailant shared the same fate. The poor Swiss thus supported, escaped for the time at least; but a cloud of smoke from a cannon discharged at their side, and a rush of the assailants into the grand hall, separated him from the person he had saved, luckily hid his interference from general notice, and enabled him to reach the interior of the palace.

And now, with a trembling heart, he forced his way in at the head of the troops, as if he had been their leader. He cast his eyes around. The halls, slippery with blood, were already yielding to the work of destruction. He mounted the broad stairs—he flew breathless through the gorgeous halls—he sought in every chamber, with the expectation of beholding the royal circle surrounded by their last defenders, and ready to be slaughtered. He had made up his mind, in such a case, to fling himself into the midst of them, and share their fate, whatever it might be. At his heels were a thousand ruffians—their drawn swords red and dripping—their hoarse screams resounding “the king! the king!”

At length they were met by another party, who had conducted the search with a better knowledge of the localities, and who were headed by a fierce young man, whose actions were those of a maniac. “*Sacré dia-*

ble!" cried he, "they are gone. The birds have flown!"

The intelligence was received with a storm of oaths and maledictions by all but Claude, who heard it with an exultation which almost deprived him of prudence. It was with difficulty he restrained himself from uttering a shout of triumph which would have betrayed him to his rough associates.

"*Mais n'importe!*" cried the voice of the young leader; "*nous y reviendrons!*"* We shall come here again."

"Oh, save me! save me!" cried a voice husky with terror, and one of the unhappy Swiss, whose companions had been all massacred, pursued by a band of butchers, rushed through the crowd. He traversed the hall with steps winged with terror, and escaped through an opposite door. All joined in the pursuit. It resembled the violent phrensy of a pack of hounds after a deer. The poor youth, better acquainted than his pursuers with the localities of the chateau, succeeded in eluding their grasp till he descended into the lower apartments and offices of that huge edifice. Here he reached the royal kitchen, with the whole yelling crew at his heels. An enormous fire, as if the royal family had expected to enjoy their dinner that day as usual, was blazing on the hearth. He sank exhausted to the floor, and was instantly seized.

"To the roof—to the roof—hurl him off!" cried a cracked female voice.

"No—the hook, the hook!" exclaimed others, pointing to a large hook in the ceiling; and several eager hands had already thrown over it a cord which hung dangling in the air.

"The fire!" shrieked a brawny woman, her eyes glittering with the light of intoxication, if not of madness.

The last proposal was received with frantic delight,

* An historical fact.

and immediately acted on. The victim was grasped by a dozen fierce hands, and bound with the cord which was to have been used in strangling him. Claude turned to escape the sight of what he could not prevent, and, as he hastened away, he heard the plunge and sudden shriek of the desperate wretch, the crackling of the sparks and flames, and the hoarse yells of the barbarian executioners.

A scream in an adjoining corridor, sounding above all the roar and tumult of the palace, now called his attention in a new direction; and, with considerable surprise, he saw several females in the last state of terror, pursued by a rabble who threatened to sacrifice them as the poor Swiss had been sacrificed before. A man had even seized the arm of one of the trembling fugitives, who, by their attire and appearance, seemed of superior rank. His trembling eagerness scarcely permitted him to examine whether Ida might not be among them, though he had persuaded himself of her escape with the queen. The defenceless victim sank upon her knee, and lifted her hands as if yielding to death. Of all the sensations which a human being can experience, perhaps that of Claude was the most singular mixture of delight and horror, on recognising in the uplifted face of the unhappy being the features of Ida. He advanced with the intention of striking dead the ruffian who still dragged his victim by the arm. But the habit of self-control here again came to his aid; for, instead of cutting down the man, which would have been the signal for an instant slaughter of himself and those he wished to defend, he seized his throat with a giant's grasp, and hurled him back against the wall.

"She is a *woman*!" cried he, in a voice so stern that for a moment the wretch paused in fear.

The wild scream which Ida uttered on recognising him, and the joy and confidence with which she clung to his arm and to his bosom, almost unnerved him for the crisis in which he found himself.

"A woman!" cried the man; "what of that? She

is my prisoner. Stand back!" and he lifted the scythe-blade which he held in his hand aloft in the air with gesticulations of fury.

Claude drew a pistol silently but firmly.

"*A bas les aristocrats!*" cried the wretch, and started forward to cut him down.

There was no longer time for delay. Claude fired. The ball passed through the assailant's brain. For a moment the commanding attitude and stern voice of him who had so boldly interfered between the lion and his wrath, arrested the party.

"What! don't you know me?" exclaimed Claude. "I am your leader. I was the first to mount the tyrant's steps. Had *he* been here, you should strike and spare not; but we shall not commence our cause by butchering *women*. Back, I say, and let us send them in safety away."

"He's right," cried two or three voices.

"He *was* the first in," said another.

"Then I demand a guard for these miserable women, who are not worth your rage," said Claude. "Go, my friends, seek more worthy game."

The young man who had made himself so conspicuous, and whose voice had first announced the escape of the royal family, here came in with some of the National Guard.

"Women?" said he; "they must be removed."

"I demand a guard to take them to a place of safety," said Claude.

"You are right, stranger," said Lazzarre. "Antoine"—he turned to one of the regular soldiers—"take twenty men and conduct these women to the next guardhouse."

The soldier obeyed. The rabble made way. The females were surrounded by their escort and marched out of the palace.* The trembling Ida was rather borne than led by Claude, whose brain reeled with a

* A fact.

joy too sweet to be certain, as he found himself under the protection of the guard, completely disentangled from the immense multitudes which now surrounded the palace, but which grew less dense at every step of their retreat, till they were far removed from the scene of action, and paused in the comparative safety of a distant and narrow street. Claude here conferred with the officer, who promised faithfully to take each one of his affrighted charge wherever they wished to go. For himself, he was in the neighbourhood of the *section du Theatre Français*. Ida, from the revulsion of feeling, and the fatigue and danger of the previous night, was almost unable to support herself. Bearing, therefore, her light form upon his arm, which thrilled beneath the beloved burden, he speedily reached his hotel, gained his room, and deposited her upon a sofa. A maid attended at his request. She was, by a fortunate chance, a modest and kind-hearted girl, entirely untouched with the revolutionary mania. Annette, her eyes bathed with tears, offered to become, through every danger, a constant and devoted attendant of the lovely young stranger thus unexpectedly committed to her care, and instantly commenced her duties.

We must beg the reader to paint, according to his own imagination, the scene which took place when Ida recovered her senses. All that sensibility and delicacy could require or bestow, marked every moment of their interview, while they hastily interchanged such particulars as were most requisite to a mutual understanding of their present position and prospects, although Claude carefully avoided revealing the great change which had taken place in his fortune, and of which Ida knew nothing. That they should quit France instantly was of course desirable; but Carolan was in prison, and Ida would not desert him. In vain Claude begged her to go herself to the frontier, with the means which he hoped to be able to supply for her journey, promising to remain, and do all in his

power to procure the count's liberation. She firmly refused to set off without her father. Whatever sentiment might have been felt of that passion which had been revealed to each other without words, and so long cherished without hope, at this instant it gave way to the more pressing thought of escape for themselves, and the means of rescuing Carolan.

"Trust to me," said Claude. "Remain where you are; if Annette will but be faithful—"

"Oh, for ever!" said the warm-hearted girl, her eyes filling with tears. "I will never abandon Mademoiselle Carolan as long as I live."

"I will consent not to leave Paris, then, till we rescue your father."

In this time, when so much prudence and courage were necessary, Claude appeared more calm and noble than Ida had ever seen him before. Even through the mean, torn, and dirty dress which he had assumed, his air was so free and commanding, his face so full of manly beauty, that, little knowing the change which had occurred in his condition, she innocently felt that her happiness depended on him, and that he was the only being who could ever possess her love. In the mean time, he placed a purse in Annette's hands, requesting her to order everything necessary to the security and comfort of her young mistress; and Annette was a *femme de chambre* whose genius could have ministered to the wants of a princess, and surrounded her with such cares as only a French *femme de chambre* had any idea of. She was as good-humoured as she was adroit and intelligent; and it seemed as if Heaven had sent, in the last moment of danger, this invaluable aid, as a token that the little party, beset as they were by perils, were not to be deserted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WITH the deepest anxiety that had ever winged his steps, Claude left Ida to the charge of Annette, and flew again to La Tour for advice and assistance in the singular situation in which he now found himself. La Tour was more alarmed, more wavering than before. He was almost resolved upon flight himself; but eyes were upon him, as he well knew, which would detect his first motion towards such a measure. Danger makes us selfish. He could but advise Claude to fly with his new companion, and to take his chance for getting out of France. As for Carolan, he assured him that the only consequences which would follow an attempt in his favour would be the arrest, and perhaps the destruction, of those who should make it.

Disappointed in the succour—which, indeed, he scarcely expected—from La Tour, Claude next proceeded to the person whose address he had procured from James, and who had been recommended as one so able, from various circumstances, to afford him aid in an emergency like the present. Ida had already informed him that her uncle, Colonel St. Marie, was still at his chateau a few leagues from Paris, and that, if she could reach it, she would there take up her abode, and consider the best means of rescuing her father from his unhappy and perilous situation. By the aid of the person alluded to, measures were arranged for their immediate departure, and the next day they succeeded in escaping safely out of Paris, and in reaching the Chateau St. Marie.

We will not detain the reader with the various hopes, fears, and emotions which animated each of the little party who, thus removed from the immediate scene of action, here debated upon the means of Carolan's deliverance and their subsequent flight out of France.

Claude was often in Paris, where he beheld scenes of which the reader would scarcely wish to hear the dark and bloody details. But, notwithstanding his exertions, he could not succeed in gaining admission to Carolan, or learning more of his fate than that he was in the *Conciergerie*, and was not likely to be released. The frightful massacre of the first, second, and third of September—the formal commencement of the Republic—the opening of the National Convention—the execution of the king, of the queen, and many more of the horrors of that remarkable period, took place; while Ida, sheltered in the chateau of her uncle, and kept, as far as was possible, in ignorance of the scenes around her, waited, with an anxiety which preyed upon her health, the dreadful course of events, till some vicissitude should either deprive her of a father whom, with all his eccentricities, she deeply loved, or should return him to her arms. Indeed, the sources of her anguish were numerous as well as profound. She had heard but indirectly from her mother, till Claude, by the arrangements which he had made with James, opened a new and more certain mode of communication. But, alas! it rather added to her grief, for she learned that her mother was dangerously ill from the effects of the agonizing suspense into which the peril of the count and Ida had thrown her.

Several months passed away, and, notwithstanding the exertions of Claude, without producing any event favourable to his wishes. The whole time was by no means spent by him at the chateau. He was sometimes weeks together at Paris—mingling with the mobs—shouting the cant watchwords—attending the tribunals, and playing the rôle of a zealous revolutionist. In the course of the various enterprises to learn the details of Carolan's present situation, he had made several attempts to see *Danton*, whose life he had saved, and whose real character and influence he had now learned better to appreciate. The faithful agent and ally supplied by James at length aided him in

presenting the affair in such a light to Danton, that that terrible arbiter of life began to listen to the propositions of a pecuniary nature which, as the time advanced and the danger grew more perilous, began to be large enough to tempt the cupidity of a much more scrupulous magistrate.

It was with feelings of such gratification as he had rarely experienced, that Claude was one day returning from Paris to the chateau St. Marie, after having nearly brought these negotiations to a conclusion, when, being almost arrived, he was alarmed by the sound of horses' feet, and a body of troops overtook him on their way to join the army of the Alps. It was about noon, and the towers of the chateau were just visible at a little distance from the road. At the sight of them the colonel ordered a halt. Claude had succeeded in hiding himself amid some thick shrubbery, in such a way that he could, without being seen, overhear the conversation. From this place of concealment he perceived that a peasant had been arrested and brought before the commander, who put several inquiries to him respecting the chateau and its occupants. The replies were of a nature to awaken considerable alarm. The man questioned was a bigoted Jacobin; and, whether from party zeal, private enmity, or the mere desire to behold a scene of carnage and plunder, related many particulars, which aroused the fury of the colonel, who seemed to be a low, coarse man, with that determined bent towards cruelty which marked so many minds during this period. The sum of the information thus received was, that the owner of the chateau was a royalist; that he had a brother, who was not only a rank aristocrat, but a Prussian nobleman; that the latter had come into France with the avowed intention of aiding the royal cause, in consequence of which he had been imprisoned, and was either beheaded or was awaiting execution; that the present occupant of the chateau was also an officer of decidedly royal sentiments, and that he was waiting to emigrate only till he

should ascertain whether the brother could be saved. The informant added, that the daughter of the imprisoned Prussian was also a resident of the chateau, and that she was a very beautiful girl, who refused to quit France from fidelity to her father; and that there was an English spy, also in the habit of remaining much with the family, although disguised under the character of a revolutionist. Claude heard, with as much astonishment as alarm, these and many other particulars related of himself and the precious charge over whose safety he had watched with so much care, some of which could only have been ascertained by a system of *espionage* which he had too carelessly concluded he had escaped.

"The *sacré* aristocrat!" then demanded Colonel Dubois, "has taken no part in the revolution?"

"No, citizen colonel," replied the peasant; "they are determined to emigrate as soon as the proper time comes."

"That they never shall," said the colonel. "What say you, my brave fellows? For us or against us is our motto; these are traitors. Shall we down with the old crow's nest about their ears?"

An enthusiastic shout announced the delight with which this proposition was received by the licentious troops; for, notwithstanding the victorious career of the French armies under the Republic, they frequently interrupted their march to indulge in excesses characteristic rather of undisciplined banditti than of regular troops.

A short council was immediately called, consisting of two or three of the officers, of which Claude did not wait to hear the result. He crept from the thicket, which fortunately led through a narrow lane shaded with trees and bushes in such a way as to conceal him from the view of the soldiery, who were, moreover, too expectant of the orders of their chief and of their anticipated booty to regard his motions. Following, therefore, the path, which lay in a direct line to it, he reached

the chateau, breathless, covered with dust, and pale with the terror which the incident had conjured up. His sudden appearance and agitation at once announced that he was the messenger of evil. Colonel St. Marie had been asleep upon a sofa, and Ida was sitting by his side lost in thought. They both started up and heard with inexpressible terror the danger which was approaching. St. Marie, although superannuated and scarcely able to walk, rose with an indignation which for a moment recalled the strength of youth to his limbs. The domestics were instantly collected, and preparations for defence were commenced. He called for his arms, and gave twenty different orders in the same minute. Three or four bewildered serving-men, incapable of rendering aid, even had there been any chance of defence, ran to and fro, scarcely knowing what they did; and St. Marie, even while grasping his sword with one trembling hand and a pistol with the other, as if determined himself to confront the ruffians who threatened him, sank back exhausted into a fauteuil, and his weapons fell from his nerveless grasp.

"Ida," said St. Marie, "*you* must fly. Wyndham, it is to you alone I dare intrust her. I know not which of the servants, if any, are worthy of confidence. One mile back through the wood is the hut of Susanne, an old family nurse, who has a certain place of concealment. I will never leave my hearthstone for these recreants. Do not seek to persuade me. This man," he added, pointing to the trembling old domestic who supported his feeble steps, "is the only one in the family who knows it besides myself. I will call the others in, and they shall not see the road you take. Fly. I commit her to your care."

"My beloved uncle—my father! Oh, merciful Heaven! preserve me," murmured Ida, fainting with terror.

"Do you fear to accompany him, my child?" demanded the old man.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Ida; "but come with us, my uncle!"

“Never.”

“Then I will not desert you—”

“I command you, Ida. Your presence here will make things worse.”

“These are dangers,” said Claude, “which make flight imperative—for you, monsieur, as well as for her. Your age—your—”

“Never. I have never fled from the enemies of France; shall I fly from her children? Never. I will receive these rude visitors in my hall as becomes a host. I will retain them if I can—at least till you are out of their reach. I will—Hark! Ida! sweet child! away.”

They embraced as those embrace who may never meet again.

The trumpet sounded a blast almost under the window. There was a trampling of horses' feet upon the stone pavement of the court, and three hoarse cheers announced the numbers and the spirit of the new-comers. Claude led his affrighted companion, with gentle force, from the arms of the high-hearted old man, and withdrew, tenderly sustaining her hasty and faltering steps. He thought himself the sport of some wild dream. He passed hastily through the gate. One of the soldiers, by the precaution of the enemy, had been already planted there. His glittering bayonet arrested them, and he levelled his musket.

“No, my fair friend!” cried he, laughing, “you are just the one we want.

“Back! Back, I say! Ha, *cochon!*” he continued, as Claude raised a pistol. He accompanied the last exclamation by discharging his musket; but, before he had time to bring it to a correct aim—before even the words had fairly left his lips, the ball, winged from the rapid hand of Claude, laid him dead upon the grass. The contents of his musket spent themselves harmlessly in the air. A wild shout from the house winged Claude's feet with yet new swiftness; and, lifting Ida upon his arm, he gained a thick grove

within a few yards of the wall, just as a crowd of shouting ruffians turned the angle of the building, which, indeed, was already a scene of shrieks, tumult, and uproar.

Completely sheltered by the bowers of the tangled wood, he fled hastily with his beloved burden. It was not long, however, when, by the increased weight upon his arm, he perceived that he bore a senseless form. He stooped to gaze upon that face, the image of so many a delicious dream, and a thousand times more beautiful in reality even than in imagination. He bathed her pale temples and closed eyes with water from a spring, that gushed from the rock against which he leaned, and, with a tremour at his heart such as he had never known before, he measured her beautiful, senseless form with fearful eyes, to assure himself that the ball of the ruffian who had fired at them had not marred the fairest mortal that ever came from the hand of nature. Terrified, yet dazzled—enraptured, yet in despair—a tenderness, which would have made him too happy to lay down his life for her, entered yet more deeply into his soul. With inexpressible rapture he perceived that she was not wounded, and that she already began to give signs of life. Her head hung back upon his arm—upon his bosom. Her eyes opened. Her mouth almost touched his own. He felt her fragrant breath upon his cheek.

At this moment he would have forgotten the danger which surrounded him had his own life alone been at stake. The obstacles to his union with Ida were removed; and her whole demeanour towards him during the time which had elapsed since their meeting in Paris, had filled his heart with new fervour, while it inspired his mind with deeper respect. Both seemed to feel that, amid the dreadful events going on around them, and in which they themselves were so deeply interested, any formal expression of their own sentiments would be out of place. The language of

both, therefore, had been only that of a friendship full of tender confidence and deep happiness, strangely mingled with apprehension and anguish. But now, with the object of his long-cherished love thus committed to his single care—thus abandoned to himself alone—thus beautiful—thus clinging to his bosom, amid the bowers of a wood hidden from every eye—he could scarcely avoid flinging himself at her feet, and declaring the passion which inspired him. But the poor girl did not participate in his forgetfulness of danger, although her very terror unconsciously betrayed the love with which she had long regarded him. As he sustained her trembling form with the delicacy of a brother, feeling that even to die for a being so dear was a greater happiness than had ever before been allotted to his dark and lonely life, he saw enough in the unguarded tenderness and dependance, which even her fear and grief betrayed, to swell his breast with rapture; that rendered him, as far as regarded his own safety, totally regardless of the tempest around.

“Do not fear,” he cried; “no peril shall reach you, dearest, beloved girl.”

A shout again came from the chateau.

“My uncle—my father! Oh, save me! save me!” she murmured, sinking from mingled fear and affection upon his bosom.

With a Herculean arm he lifted her once more, and did not pause again till he reached the hut of old Susanne.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NEAR the hut of Susanne was a subterranean passage, in former times connected with the chateau. It communicated with a rude outhouse, which had been

used for some mysterious purpose, of which the tradition was lost. This retreat was known only to three persons in the family of St. Marie—himself, Susanne, and one of his oldest and most faithful serving-men. It was in order to procure to Ida the advantage of this place of security that he had sent her to Susanne, unwilling to trust the secret to any other of the servants on an occasion where there might be so many temptations to betray it.

With hasty and trembling steps the two females took their place in this passage, of which the opening could not be discovered without the treachery of some one possessed of the secret. Leaving Ida here in comparative safety, Claude determined not to remain with them, but to reconnoitre from a distant position, and to defend it from any one who might by chance approach it.

He therefore selected a spot where he thought he would be concealed, and remained, with emotions of mixed agony and happiness, to await the events of this interesting day. He could see the towers of the chateau, and, before an hour had elapsed, he beheld their tops surrounded with masses of smoke—a sad token of the work of destruction going on beneath. Off his guard, he gazed at this ominous sign with so much attention, that he did not observe the approach of four soldiers till they were so near that they discovered him. He had one loaded pistol. His enemies were completely armed. His first impulse was to sell his life dearly; but he reflected that resistance was certain death, while submission afforded at least a chance of safety. He yielded, therefore, with readiness, and was instantly conducted back to the chateau.

It was with some difficulty that he could repress an exclamation of horror at the sight which met his view on arriving there. The large saloon was filled with a clamorous and half-drunken band of soldiers, seated at the tables, having finished an ample feast. The servants were bound and ranged against the wall. Sev-

eral of them were females. Colonel St. Marie himself stood also bound in the midst of them, his face and dress stained with blood from a wound on his head. The ruin of the interior of the chateau was nearly accomplished. The costly furniture was scattered around in fragments, having been wantonly broken with axes and pikes. All that was portable and valuable was stowed away in sacks and wagons. Mirrors had been dashed to atoms; statues, clocks, candelabras, chandeliers, shattered; and invaluable paintings and rich old tapestry cut to pieces with sabres and bayonets. Everything which could be discovered in the building had been brought forth to supply the demands of five hundred voracious soldiers; and whole pipes of choice wine had been dragged from the cellar, and had been already so far exhausted by the brutal guests, that a general excitement, not far from actual intoxication, had reduced them from the appearance of troops with at least some claims to discipline, to little better than a mob of drunken robbers and cutthroats. Money and plate had been grasped by greedy hands, and were piled up in baskets preparatory to being packed; and several attempts had been made to set fire to the chateau, one of which seemed likely to be successful, for in an adjoining room the flames were slowly advancing, and emitted volumes of smoke—what Claude had already perceived at a distance.

The feast was now done, and the men had risen and were standing erect as well as they could. The colonel fixed himself in his seat with a magisterial air, and, slapping his hand furiously down upon the table till he made the plates and glasses ring again, commanded order.

“Citizen-soldiers!” said this man, with a drunken hiccough, “you have done well. You have done your duty. We have already the benefit arising from clearing France of these vile aristocrats. They must be swept off the face of the earth like so many reptiles. The population is to be reduced one fourth. Had I

been consulted, it should have been one half. Then there should be bread and wine, and land and gold for the remainder. Then there would be no more prisons—no more starvation—no more oppression—no more jails. All would be free, happy, and rich. It is these drones, who eat the fat of the land and do nothing—these ruthless tyrants, who have trampled on you for so many years—who have caused all the wretchedness of poor France. It is decided that her population must be diminished. Our glorious Danton—our wise and patriotic Robespierre, have pointed out the way. We have fired this old den of aristocrats—you may hear the roaring of the flames. As for the brood of vipers who have nestled here, their doom is sealed. They must (hiccough) die. They hate our glorious revolution, and they must die, I say.”

This discourse was delivered with a drunken energy, which was often interrupted by the inability of the speaker to proceed from mere intoxication, but yet more by the coarse and exulting cheers of the brutal auditory, and the groans and shrieks of the victims. These unhappy beings—a few hours before in the full enjoyment of life and hope—thus suddenly brought upon the brink of eternity, manifested in various ways their horror and despair. Some shrieked aloud—some wept—some clasped their hands in silent horror, and some in pious prayer. St. Marie himself—his eyes flashing with horror and rage—addressed the wretch who sat thus in bloody judgment over him in terms of dignified remonstrance. But all were alike in vain.*

“Company, attention,” cried Col. Dubois; and for a moment the rolling of the drums drowned all other noises. “Bring out the prisoners.”

* Many a similar scene had been already acted in France. Let it not be supposed that the writer is drawing an exaggerated picture from imagination. He copies from historical records; and they who, in England, or France, or any other country, are so eager to raise the banner of revolution, should their rash design prove successful, would behold equally awful outrages.

They were thrust rudely forward in front of the chair where the ruffian sat with a magisterial air, his eye glassy with wine and that appalling desire to glut his sight with human blood, which seemed then an epidemic in France.

"Here is another prisoner, citizen colonel," said one of the soldiers; and Claude was thrust roughly into the middle of the floor. "At the sight of him there was a comparative silence among even the rude soldiery, as if they felt a new interest in the drama.

"Who are you?" demanded the colonel.

"I am a teacher of languages," said Claude, firmly and boldly. "I fled from Berlin to join the revolutionists. I am at a loss to know why these men have confounded me with the enemies of France."

"Were you known to any one as a friend to the revolution?"

"Yes, to Danton!"

"He is the spy—the English spy," said the peasant who had given the information which led to the attack.

"You are greatly mistaken," said Claude, composedly; "I am so far from being a spy, that I was the first to enter the Tuileries on the glorious tenth of August. I was the first to enter the tyrant's palace."

"Humph!" said the colonel. "That is easily said, but not so easily proved. The first to enter the tyrant's palace! Liar! you shall confront him who was the first, for he is an officer in our company. Here, come forward," he cried, beckoning to a person at the other end of the hall.

A wild-looking young man, with long hair streaming about his face, and piercing black eyes, stepped forward at the call. Claude recognised him in a moment as the young leader on that bloody day who had been so near him.

"If this man recognise you," said the colonel, "you shall go free; if not, you die on the spot for a liar and

an aristocrat. Hey, my brave boys! is not this Solomon's decision?"

And he laughed triumphantly at the certainty which he presumed he had now established of convicting his prisoner in this summary way.

"It is hardly fair," said Claude; "but, to show you how sure I am, and how little I fear any harm from these my comrades in the great cause, citizen colonel, I accept the offer."

"Look at him, then," said the colonel.

Lazarre fixed his bright black eyes upon him, measured him with his glances from head to foot, and said,

"No—I never saw him. He is an impostor."

"But I saw you," said Claude, calmly; "and I will convince you you also saw me."

"If you did," said the stranger, haughtily, "you would know my name. It was sounded that day by mouths enough."

"You were called *Lazarre*," said Claude. "You mounted the great stairs waving a banner, on which was inscribed, '*Down with the Veto!*' You shot a Swiss at the entrance."

"Flying?"

"No—in his box. Behind you were borne three heads on a pike; and when we learned the flight of the tyrant, you exclaimed, '*N'importe, mes amis; nous y reviendrons!*' In the kitchen you—that is, we—threw a fugitive into the flames."

"By Gracchus! did we not?" said Lazarre, extending his hand. "Not a hair of your head shall be touched."

"And it is hard, after being foremost in tearing down the tyrant's throne—in ridding the nation of her oppressors—to find myself counted among them," said Claude, in a surly tone, and with a frown of anger at Colonel Dubois.

"Ha! get back, then, citizen, in God's name," said the colonel, as Lazarre again greeted him with a friendly welcome. "As for you—*coquins! nigeauds! co-*

chons !" cried the colonel, addressing the rest of the prisoners, "look your last on the light of day. The enemies of France must fall! Revenge (hiccough) revenge is the order of the day. You're rebels! (hiccough) you're aristocrats! (hiccough) and ye must die! Silence, I say," cried he, as the voices of the prisoners burst forth, some in supplication, some in threats. "There is one chance for you; a woman—a girl, *parbleu!*—has escaped us, and is concealed somewhere, as I am informed, in or about this chateau. He or she among you who will tell me where she is hidden, shall receive his life as a reward; for the rest—Sergeant Gregoire, lead your prisoners into the court. Choose a file of twenty men, the least drunk among ye, and make short work of them, for we must be on our journey. Hark ye, wretches—I give you *one minute*—which of you will tell me where this young breeder of rebels and aristocrats is?"

There were seven among the prisoners. Of them St. Marie and one servant alone knew Ida's place of concealment. The latter had heard the order which St. Marie had given, but he remained pale and motionless.

Claude believed that all this brutal parade was but a mode of tempting those who knew the secret into a confession.

"*Allons, messieurs!*" said Dubois; "you have ten seconds. By Brutus! I am in earnest."

"You cannot—you dare not—" cried St. Marie.

"Ah! old *coquin*, that is your opinion!"

"In the name of humanity—of France—" cried St. Marie.

"Sergeant Gregoire," said the colonel, "the time has expired. Forward, and do your duty."

The sergeant advanced. He had placed himself at the head of twenty men, who, with their charged bayonets, compelled the prisoners to proceed. Claude caught one agonized glance from St. Marie. At the

door one man stopped and cried aloud for mercy. It was the old servant who alone possessed the secret.

"Lache!" cried St. Marie.

"Stop," cried the man, "I will reveal—I will—I will—" and he fell upon his knees in the last paroxysm of terror.

"Speak out, then, reptile," thundered Dubois.

"I will—I will—" gasped the trembling old man, nearly insensible with terror; "she—she—I cannot—I am choked!"

"And may God's curse fall on *him*," cried St. Marie, with a voice so deep and stern; that, for a moment, it awed even the half-drunken wretch himself who presided over this diabolical scene—"may God's curse light on him who, to save his miserable life, commits my sweet child to the grasp of these hellhounds—the curse of God—a dying man calls it down upon him and his for ever!"

"I cannot help it," gasped the man; "give me life, and I care not. She—she is hidden in—"

All leaned forward with increasing interest to catch the words from his pale and quivering lips. St. Marie struggled to spring upon him. He was bound, and held by two strong men. But the speaker's voice was stopped by another hand. A bullet from the remaining pistol of Claude, which he had carefully concealed in his bosom, lodged in the temples of the unhappy wretch. He fell back dead without a groan. St. Marie gave a shout of triumph, and a wild yell of fury burst from the throng, who threw themselves upon Claude, with their muskets and sabres in hand, to cut him to pieces.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT the tumult which followed this bold act, Claude believed his last moment had come. He was seized by a dozen brawny hands, sabres flashed and clashed before his eyes, and he was borne to the floor, and had scarcely time to commit himself to the mercy of his Creator, ere he felt two bullets whiz past his head, and a sword pass through his body. The next instant would have terminated his existence had not Colonel Dubois himself interfered. His deep, coarse voice, in tones of thunder, demanded order, and his gigantic arm rescued his victim from immediate destruction, in order to succeed, if possible, in tearing the secret from him before his death. It was after much discord and struggling that the commander succeeded in forming his men once more in a kind of order, and he instantly proceeded to question Claude. Accounts of the beauty of the young girl who had escaped him had excited his curiosity and inflamed his imagination, and he resolved to secure her at any rate. The continual return of the men who had been sent in search of her without having accomplished their object, yet farther aroused his passion.

"So, friend, you know the secret hiding-place, then?" said he, as Claude, whose wound was much slighter than he thought, stood bleeding, but unshrinking, before him.

"I do."

"You will reveal it to me?"

"No."

"You shall be richly rewarded if you do—you shall die like a dog if you refuse."

"I am ready."

"Is she your mistress?"

"She is a woman, and I cannot betray her."

"We will see. Sergeant Gregoire, leave this bold youth with me. Conduct the rest of the prisoners into the court, and do your duty—instantly."

Stupified, incredulous, bewildered, the unhappy beings were marched out. The soldiers' tramping tread was heard as they drew up on the pavements under the window, and at each motion their muskets clanked with an ominous regularity.

Dubois filled a large glass with wine till it overflowed.

"You think, perhaps, I am not in earnest," said he.

Claude's heart turned to ice. He could not believe his eyes.

"Will you save your life? I swear you shall be untouched if you will utter one word to put me on the clew."

"I am not a traitor. I cannot purchase my life at such a price," replied Claude.

At that instant was heard the discharge of musketry, and a deep groan, that made Claude thrill with horror in every fibre of his frame. Even Dubois turned pale. Claude's face also was bloodless, and a faintness came over him, such as no pen may describe—such as he thought would suspend his being without the aid of the executioner.

"Let them cry '*Vive le Roi*' now!" said Dubois; "and as for *you*—you shall follow them in *one minute* if you do not reveal your secret; will you do so?"

"I protest against this brutal barbarity," said Claude. "I cannot believe, Monsieur le Colonel, that you will murder me for refusing the basest act of cowardice and treachery. I throw myself upon your generosity—your *mercy*" (and his voice quivered).

"Do you mean to say," cried Dubois, turning livid with rage, "that you still *refuse* to discover the retreat of this woman?"

"I do," said Claude.

Sergeant Gregoire here marched in at the head of his silent company, who ranged themselves in a line

before the table, and at his command reloaded their pieces.

"Gregoire," said Dubois, "lead ten more men into the court, and send this obstinate fool after his companions."

"Cold-blooded fiend!" said Claude.

The ruffian made a furious gesture with his arm.

"Forward—march," said the sergeant, with military brevity.

Claude advanced. He had done with life. This, then, was death. They passed from the hall—through the corridor—into the open air. The sky was above him. The afternoon sunshine fell calm and yellow in the court. The breeze touched his face. He heard the barking of a dog—the careless warble of a bird—a flock of pigeons swept down into the court, and, frightened by the soldiery, rose and mounted again into the balmy air. He beheld the waving branches of the trees. The silver clouds were lying in the heavens, and the broad green fields were stretched in the distance. He cast one look above—around—then the form of Ida arose to his imagination.

One word could save him, but that word would consign her to a fate worse than death.

"No," said Claude; "when the hand of a profligate dashed a blow upon my forehead, I refused to peril my life because I thought the occasion unworthy of it. Here humanity—honour—courage, call upon me to throw it away. May God protect this now unfriended girl and receive my soul."

"Comrades!" said Claude, with a firm, bold voice.

"Hold! he yields," cried Dubois from the window.

"I ask one favour!"

"It shall be granted!" cried Dubois.

"Let me give the word *myself*; and, when you fire, *aim at the heart*."

The sound of horses' hoofs was heard. They approached at a rapid rate. A horseman rode into the court. He was of gigantic stature. The crowd of

ruffians recognised him, and hailed his approach with acclamations and cries of "*Vive Danton!*"

"What is this—who is this?" cried he. "*Sacre diable!* I know this face. Ah! where is your colonel, my good fellows? You have been busy, I see; so much the better; but this—I have seen that face before, and I owe it a service. See, he is falling. Is he already dead?"

In truth, loss of blood and the emotions of these scenes had been too much for Claude's strength. He had stood erect to receive the fire of the soldiers, and he had already bidden farewell to earth; but in the delay so much beyond the moment, when he expected to receive the fire of his murderers in his bosom, the excitement of the moment, which had sustained him till then, gave way—his brain swam—a coldness, a faintness, and then a darkness crept over him. He believed already the ghastly ordeal past. He sank down upon the stones, and saw and heard no more of what was going on around him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IT was several days after the preceding events, and at the first sign of daybreak on a cloudless morning towards the latter part of the autumn, that a wretched, half-broken carriage, with two spavined horses and a ragged postillion, drew up at a small *auberge* near the old chateau St. Marie. A rough but strong horse, saddled, was attached to a post at the door; and Claude, in the Jacobin costume of that period, at the sound of the wheels, appeared at the door and had some moments' consultation with the postillion. They both looked with many signs of impatience towards Paris, when the sound of another vehicle was heard with such

lively tokens of satisfaction that it was easy to discover how much interest they had in its approach. They then retired within the house, of which the window-shutters and curtains were carefully closed. The second carriage also drew up at the little inn, and three figures stepped out. One was St. Marie, the other Carolan, the third the tall and gaunt figure of Danton—his rough and burly visage expanded with good-humour, and his deep voice every instant making itself heard in half-uttered exclamations of pleasure and self-satisfaction.

“*Ah ! ca ! voyons !*” said he, patting Carolan ; “*go in—par Dieu !—ha ! ha ! Attendez, mon ami, attendez—you will see in the house—ah ! ha ! ha !*”

Of these three persons, the most strikingly changed in dress, appearance, and manner was Carolan. He was pale, emaciated, ragged, and stained with filth. His manner was subdued into a wretchedness and despair which strongly contrasted with his usual self-complacency and arrogance ; and he looked with such a bewildered and terrified air upon his facetious conductor, and watched so eagerly for the person who should answer the tap on the door, that it was clear he had not yet been let into the secret of what he was to behold. Indeed, he had been now, for the first time, taken out of his miserable prison, where he had been many months confined, and where he had witnessed scenes enough to break the spirit of a bolder man ; and he expected little more in the present morning than to be conducted to the guillotine, or to be massacred in some less open way. Half dead with terror and exhaustion, he was led hastily in through the opened door, and found himself in the presence of Claude, who, completely dressed for travelling, seized his hand and led him into a room, where Ida, in the plain dress of a maid-servant, which she had procured from *Annette* (and in which, by-the-way, she looked extremely pretty), threw herself into his arms with a flood of tears.

“What is this ? where are we ? St. Marie ! Wyndham !”

“Stay not to inquire, my dearest father,” said Ida, clinging to his bosom with streaming eyes.

“But—”

“Be satisfied,” said Claude. “Dearest sir, all is right; we have no time to lose. This moment we take our flight out of France.”

“Ah, Dieu! out of France? By what means? How have I escaped my dungeon? where? what friend? Danton drew off dozens for the guillotine—it is but by the chance of a lot that I was not beheaded yesterday.”

“Come, come,” said the huge and good-humoured stranger, a cloud passing a moment over his broad, rough countenance, “nothing against Danton this morning, if you please. I am *Danton!* and it is to *me*, under that honest person yonder, that you owe your freedom. What! do you think me a monster, because you do not see the wisdom of the plans which a dire necessity makes me follow for poor oppressed France? Believe me, sir, although I am the reluctant cause of much unhappiness and bloodshed, it is for France and for mankind that I am so. But do not carry away with you, to the happy country where I learn you are going, the idea that I am insensible to kind emotions. No! I sympathize with the distress I am compelled to occasion, and often I relieve it. Be yourselves at once the witnesses and the proof of my mercy. To free Carolan and St. Marie I have been obliged to make great exertions, and to run even some danger; but I am not the man to be easily discouraged. Go—you are free. Your course to Nymeguen shall not be interrupted. I send with you an officer, with such a passport as will carry you past the frontier without a single stoppage. Go, friends, to a happy land—to a happier fate; leave France to woes unutterable, and *me*, perhaps, to the *scaffold!*”

He passed out without other adieu, and the carriage which brought him was heard rattling away back to Paris.

"What magic! what guardian angel!" muttered Carolan; "who has done all this?"

Ida pointed to Claude, and strove to speak, but could not.

"Allons, messieurs, en route," said a strange voice, startling all from their mutual congratulations. It was the *gen d'armes* provided by Danton.

"I am desired to see you safe to the frontier," said the soldier; "we have no time to lose."

It need not be added that but little time was wasted in getting ready. The count and Ida, with Annette and St. Marie, entered the carriage. Claude mounted his horse. He was thoroughly armed, and it would have been ill with any one who had interrupted their path.

The old horses accomplished the journey better than could have been expected from their appearance; and at length, all dangers past, they reached Rotterdam, and sought in a good hotel the repose of mind and body of which they all stood in need.

History, which records the extraordinary manner in which a crowd of ladies belonging to the court of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette were rescued from the mob by one or two of the leaders of the memorable attack on the royal chateau on the tenth of August, and escorted in safety from the scene of action, has also left several authentic evidences of intervals of the kind-heartedness and *bonhomie* of Danton, and his readiness to sympathize with individual instances of distress, even at the time when he was calculating how many hundred thousand heads were to fall before France could be depopulated to the necessary point.

We cannot think of entering too much into details respecting the few days passed by our party of fugitives at Rotterdam, to recover from the exhaustion consequent upon their visit to France, and to wait also the sailing of the vessel which was to bear them to London, for there it had been determined they should go. Count Carolan's broken health and St. Marie's

age and feebleness nearly monopolized the society of Ida; and Claude, with a delicacy peculiar to his character, avoided pressing himself too much into their presence. After a separation so long and events so agitating, he preferred leaving them together; besides which, he had many arrangements to make, letters to write, and affairs to attend to, of which they little suspected the import. It was impossible, however, to avoid many moments of solitary meeting, which were full of enchantment to Claude, as they fully confirmed those tokens of tender confidence which had escaped from his charge while flying through the wood from the chateau St. Marie. Their mutual demeanour, without any formal avowal of their attachment, had insensibly assumed a character more and more indicative of the sentiments they entertained for each other—far different from what it had ever been before, and, perhaps, from what either intended. Long before the ship-captain who had agreed to take them to London was ready to sail, Claude had learned to regard Ida as his own, with a feeling of deep happiness which more than compensated for all that he had suffered; and she also, by no means a dull scholar, had learned to listen to his words—to lean on his arm—to gaze into his face, as the fondest wife receives the regards of the happiest husband.

The rescue of St. Marie had been all but miraculous. When on the point of massacring him, it was discovered that he had a large sum of money in the hands of an English banker. It was the policy of certain among the rulers of that period to spare those who could purchase their lives with a sufficient ransom. St. Marie had been saved, and secretly sent to Paris, and thrust into the same prison which contained Carolan, until he should complete the transfer necessary to his release. He had shared the benefit of Claude's negotiations, but both he and Carolan were impoverished. Their whole fortune had been sacrificed.

Carolan had strangely altered during his several

months' experience of a prison and the few hours when he thought they were leading him to death. All his pomposity of manner had disappeared. He was simple, grateful, and perfectly natural. He did not even appear half so much an —— (the word Claude had used himself in former times, but wondered that he should have done so) as he was generally considered; but, on the contrary, he discovered himself to be a man of mind, sense, and feeling, which valuable attributes had been miraculously restored by a wholesome period of adversity. How many are there who would be improved by the same means! There were moments when Claude even respected and liked him; and our manuscript goes on to assert, that the favourable opinion thus produced of his good taste and discrimination was by no means diminished when, one day, just as Claude and Ida were proposing to go out to walk—probably for the last time before the little vessel which was to bear them to London, and which was to start with the first fair wind, should sail—he came out with,

“Wyndham, you are the very finest fellow that ever lived. Your conduct to me has been entirely noble. I have been reflecting on it a great deal, and, I am ashamed to add, mine to you has been unworthy of me. You have acted like a man, and I like a fool. I am sadly impoverished by the demand of Danton, but I hope I am not ruined. I have enough for us all to live upon, and—”

Here Claude turned very red, and Ida equally pale; but, in a moment, as if they were exchanging cheeks as well as hearts, Ida turned crimson, and the blood ebbed from the face of Claude.

“You have saved Ida's life and—”

“I think the wind is freshening,” said Ida, rising, “and we shall sail to-night.”

“But not,” said the count, drawing her towards him, and suffering her to hide her face in his bosom, “till I have consigned you, Ida, to a master abler to protect and worthier to possess you than I or any other human being.”

"I cannot," said Claude, "at present enter into any such contract."

"Cannot!" echoed Carolan, the colour now in turn spreading over his face.

Ida only clung to him the more closely, with a faint exclamation, which was instantly suppressed.

"I deem it proper," said Carolan, a touch of his old manner crossing him for the first time since his imprisonment, "to say, that I have no authority for my remark but your own apparent desire; and that an imperative sense of duty will demand, that instantly—"

"Suspend your displeasure for a while, my dear count," said Claude. "There is another—a *lady*, who has a prior right over me."

Ida sprang back and gazed with astonishment.

"Why, confound it, sir!" thundered the count, "are you already married?"

"At London I will tell all," said Claude, with a quiet smile. "You have kept me some time waiting; do not complain if, for a few hours—"

"Complain!" said Carolan, with his chin again in the air.

Ida looked at Claude; his eyes were not averted, and he even took her hand, and pressed it respectfully and tenderly to his lips.

They were interrupted by the captain, a fine old English sailor, with a face the colour of a mahogany table.

"Come, shipmates," said he, "all ready! we're off in an hour, and, with this wind, we shall see the Tower in less than no time."

"That will be an extremely short passage!" said Claude, who seemed blessed with an uncommon flow of spirits, which no one had ever seen in him before; "but you cannot be too quick for us, my old heart of oak!"

"Come aboard, then, sir, and we'll show you what the little *Sally Darly* can do. She'll make eleven

knot before ten. Take care of that plank, miss. Hadn't you better let me hand the young lady, sir?"

"No, captain," said Claude; "if the *Sally Darly* is such an interesting creature, you must devote yourself to her, and I shall relieve you of the young lady, who has her good points too."

Ida lifted her eyes half tearfully, half laughingly to his, and, if wonder was mixed with their tenderness, he saw at once there was no doubt. As they crossed the plank over which it was necessary to pass to the *Sally Darly* from the wharf, Ida shrunk a moment from the narrow board; but Claude drew her arm in his, and, as he supported her on her way, it was quite surprising to see the effect of mere timidity upon her cheeks; for it was not proved that the single word which Claude murmured in her ear as he passed his arm around her waist and partly carried her on board, could have had any connexion with their heightened colour, nor with the downcast glance of quiet happiness which was scarcely shaded by her glittering lashes.

The *Sally Darly*, unlike belles in general, more than equalled the praises of her admirer. She sped over the water with all the impatience felt by some of her passengers; and at last the sweet shores of old England—land of peace and virtue—that "emerald gem set in the silver sea"—rose on either side of them. The now nearer shores revealed their soft beauties to the eyes of the enchanted travellers, whose joy was only clouded by a reflection of the frightful wo which devoured the unhappy land they had left behind. The *Sally Darly*, faithful to her captain's promise, was soon anchored off the Tower, and the party was speedily landed and committed to the mercies of the custom-house officers, who were then, as they are now, very civil fellows to those who deserve it.

While waiting for the examination of their luggage, St. Marie and Carolan held a long consultation in a distant corner of the room, which, by their gloomy

faces, was probably concerning the total ruin of their fortunes.

Ida and Claude sat together upon a bench, waiting, whether with impatience or not we shall not say, for the termination of this their second, but less serious captivity. While engaged in conversing, in a low voice, in a shadowy embrasure of the room, Ida's veil drawn close over her bonnet, so that no one except her companion could distinguish her features, a boy entered and handed to Claude a note. It was addressed to Mademoiselle Ida Carolan, and it was her mother's handwriting.

She opened it with trembling eagerness. It ran thus :

"MY BELOVED CHILD,

"Having just despatched a line to your father, I avail myself of a last moment to tell you I am in London, well and happy. I have heard all by the attentive care of Mr. Wyndham. I know that your father's and uncle's splendid fortunes are entirely sacrificed, but I know also that you are safe, and that makes me happy. Yes, my child, we are beggars—we have nothing; but we shall meet in an hour, and this thought makes all misfortunes supportable.

"Adieu for an hour, etc., etc."

"My mother in London?" said Ida. "Oh, *you* have done this!"

"I wrote her from Paris to meet us there."

"And *ruined*—and—and—*well*," said Ida, the momentary shadow of her face passing away in the joyful news of her mother's recovered health and presence in London.

"Yes, dearest Ida, she tells you the truth; your father's fortune, as well as your uncle's, is entirely gone. Can you be happy without the splendour to which you have been accustomed? Without palaces—and equipages—and serving-men? Can you be happy beneath a

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lowly roof—without society—without grandeur—leading a simple, a lonely life, even—despised by the unfeeling—pitied by the compassionate—neglected, and at length forgotten by all? Can you be happy thus, dear Ida?"

He held out his hand; she laid her own in it with a blush that gave new charm to her beauty.

"With *you*—in the loneliest spot—beneath the humblest roof—far away from grandeur and the grand—I ask no more. Oh, if you could know how often and often I have wished my father was poor—that he would lose all his fortune, that there might be no obstacle to our union. You think I shall regret my grandeur? Oh, no—never! It has made my unhappiness. It separated me from you."

"Where shall we go, then? What shall we do? You know I am but just out of prison for a paltry debt. How shall we get our living in England?"

"Oh, a thousand ways. I will become a governess. I will teach languages, as *you* did. Little did you know how I admired your conduct—how I—I *loved* you—when I used to see you, so meanly dressed—so pale—so melancholy—so neglected—going through the streets to give your lessons. Your common clothes were a thousand times more beautiful to me than all the handsomest court uniforms; and when I used to be at the king's suppers, how much rather I should have been with you in your poor jail. Oh"—the tears filled her eyes—"never will you know what I suffered till I succeeded in making Lavalley relieve you!"

"Well, then, you shall become a governess, and I will also teach languages. We will open a little school together—"

"Oh, we shall be too—*too* happy!"

"In the mean time, I have a mother—"

"You a *mother*? you! How extremely strange! I thought—they told me—"

"Yes, I have a mother. We are going to her house. Prepare yourself to be pained at the meanness, the

poverty of my abode ; a miserable contrast to your father's gorgeous palace at Berlin. Then my mother—I hope you will like her !”

“Oh, I am sure I shall,” said Ida, but with a timid and hesitating air, and pale at the gloomy picture he had presented.

They were now released by the custom-house officers, and passed into the street, free to go whithersoever they would.

“But where *shall* we go ?” said the count. “Have you thought of this, Mr. Wyndham ?”

“Oh yes,” said Ida, timidly.

“I really cannot tell the way myself,” said Claude, “but yonder is a person who perhaps will assist us.”

A stout, good-looking, and very neatly-dressed man, in a plain but handsome livery, approached as he spoke.

“Welcome, my lord !” said he. “Welcome back to England !”

Ida looked inclined to laugh, and Carolan stared in silent surprise.

“Is he crazy ?” asked Ida of Claude, in a whisper.

“The carriage is in this direction,” said the man, respectfully. “The servants will take your lordship's things, if you'll please to say which they are.”

Claude did so, and followed James.

They found a large and elegant carriage waiting for them. Claude aided in Ida, and St. Marie, and the count, and then entered himself. Annette, all astonished, found herself on the box with a coachman so large and dignified looking, so curiously and elegantly dressed, that she knew not whether he was not a great English lord.

“Grosvenor Square !” said James. “Drive fast !”

And off they dashed, at a velocity which might have taxed the powers even of the “*Sally Darly*” to equal.

They stopped before a magnificent mansion. A crowd of domestics were at the door and ranged along the hall. All was lofty—grand—magnificent.

“Where *are* we going ?” said the count. “Permit me—really—to observe, Mr. Wyndham, that—”

"Where—*where* are we?" said Ida, as they entered a suite of splendid drawing-rooms.

"*At home!* my sweet, sweet girl," said a well-known voice; and she was folded in the arms of her mother, and then of Madame Wharton.

"And my hero—my *son!*" said Madame Wharton, pale as death, and her face bathed in tears.

Pale—paler than all the dangers through which he had passed could make him, Claude entered the last. It seemed as if he had paused to gather strength and firmness to meet the flood of joy which now overwhelmed him.

"My mother! my beloved mother!" was all his quivering lips could utter; and they were folded in each other's arms, with emotions which we shall be easily excused for not attempting to depict.

How all the discoveries were communicated to each other—how Ida and the count were made to comprehend—how Claude learned what he had still to learn—how the servants gazed at their new master—how comfortable and elegant every one of the worn and exhausted travellers found the apartments separately allotted to them—how all were refreshed by the bath, the toilet, and the most delightful restoratives—how Annette's head almost turned giddy with joy when she found in what way her disinterested affection for her young mistress was to be rewarded—how transformed they all were in a few hours, by aid of new costume, and the care of maids and valets—how—in short, it would be an endless, if not a hopeless task to describe the scenes which followed. Suffice it to say, that everything went just as it should; everything fell out as fortunately as if it had been a play, or a piece of enchantment, or one of the mere fictions which those good-for-nothing varlets the novel writers invent according to their own idle imagination.

Some days entirely restored the whole party to health and spirits; for, when the mind is free from care and the heart at ease, the body is easily cured.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THERE is much more to relate of the prominent characters in the past history, but we are already, we fear, trespassing beyond the limits generally allotted to such a story. The reader will, we trust, excuse omissions which he may easily supply with his own imagination.

It was many weeks before Claude sufficiently recovered from the avocations and emotions consequent upon the new position in which he found himself, to think calmly upon the past or the future. Within that period he had become the husband of her whom he had loved so ardently, and for whom he had dared so many dangers. The novel prospects opened to him—the duties, acquaintances, responsibilities, pleasures, and plans, so far above all his wildest fancy could have pictured or his highest hopes desired—expanded his mind with almost a new existence. It required all his firmness of character to remain unchanged; but he *did* so; and, ere many months had passed away, he had subdued excesses of joy as he had before done excesses of grief, and learned to move with calmness and self-possession in his new sphere. A more contented husband, a happier wife, perhaps never assumed the graver responsibilities of matrimony. For each had that conscientious and clear perception of duty—that innate sense of moral right, which had sustained both in adversity, and did not desert them in prosperity. Amid the happiness by which they were surrounded, consisting of all that earth could bestow, they did not fail to prostrate themselves, as humbly as ever they had done at their darkest hour, before that Supreme Being before whom all the forms of life are as passing shadows, except what is founded in the power of self-government and the practice of virtue, at

the sacrifice even of the world's applause—even of the happiness of the heart.

Some time after their union, Claude walked through one of the back streets of London in order to seek and relieve a poor fugitive recently escaped out of France. He arrived at the door of the house indicated as the residence of the object of his search. He knocked. The man was not at home, and he was leaving the door, when a woman, apparently a beggar, passed him and entered the door. She had on a worn and tattered frock, entirely divested of ornament; an old bonnet scarcely fit for use. It was a cold winter day, but she was without cloak, shawl, and gloves, and seemed emaciated with sickness, grief, and hunger, and trembling with cold. As she entered she staggered against the wall, apparently intoxicated; so much so that Claude drew back, with that disgust which one feels at beholding a woman in so degraded a situation.

"She's drunk, sir, poor thing," said the bloated-faced woman who kept the wretched lodging-house; "but I never seed her so afore. She's generally a werry temperate person, though werry poor pay. I must turn her out to-day, as I can't afford to take people in my house for nothing—and drunken sluts like her too! Here, you—good woman! you might as well hear it now as later. You must clear out o' my house. Tramp—clear! Your room's better than your company!"

Claude was about leaving the steps, when he was arrested by the voice of the unfortunate creature, and the deep anguish and pathos so far removed from intoxication.

"For God's dear sake, do not turn me out to-day!" said she. "I shall die on the pavement."

"Die where you like, so long as you don't die in my house," replied the woman.

"Oh, what shall I do?"

"People as can afford to get drunk—"

"Drunk? Oh, I am not, believe me. I am only faint from fatigue and want of food."

She turned her face—Claude's eyes fell upon it.

"Great God!" he cried, "do my eyes deceive me? No—it is impossible."

"Mr. Wyndham! Merciful Heaven! I thank you. Yes, it is I."

"Mrs. Denham!"

"Yes—starving in the street—fainting with hunger. Oh, sir," she added, a flood of shame crimsoning her pale face, "that you should ever see me in this situation!"

Tears of bitter pain and self-reproach filled Claude's eyes, and had hitherto kept him silent. In the fullness of his bliss he had neglected to inquire of her.

"Poor Denham!" he faltered.

"Don't name him! Oh, Mr. Wyndham, that rash act—that selfish—that—what suffering it has caused me! My father—"

"Your father?"

"Dead!"

"And your friends—your family?"

"All that I could have appealed to are far away from London, and I would not be a burden to those already poor. I thought I could make a living, first by drawing, then by teaching music, then by sewing, and lately by going out to service. Yes, I have been a *maid-servant* rather than eat the bread of beggary or shame. But my helplessness—my feebleness—my misery—my ill health, disqualified me for all occupation. I have been ill, too, and alone; the privations I have suffered—the coarse unkindness of the people about me—the insults offered me, and the gross vice I have been obliged to witness—to be in contact with—oh, Charles, Charles, had you known what was to follow, would you have brought upon your poor wife all these horrors?"

"And Ellen?"

"She has a place at a shoemaker's in the city. She works fourteen hours a day, and scarcely gains her bread; they abuse and beat her—she—I—"

And the unhappy being, turning ashy pale, staggered

back, and would have fallen had not Claude caught her on his arm.

He called instantly for a hackney-coach, and, in the mean time, the woman of the house administered to her wants with a world of protestations and apologies. She said that she had already pitied her from her heart—that she had already seen she was something better than common. She had told her husband she would not wonder if she had been even a *carriage-lady* in her time.

Madam Denham revived as the coach drove up to the door, and Claude supported her in with the assistance of a maid, whom he requested to accompany them. He ordered the coachman to drive at once to Grosvenor Square. Ida received her unhappy guest with the sympathy which such hearts as hers always feel with misfortune; but when she learned who she was, and how far her husband was, although innocently, the cause of her calamity, she fully entered into all his feelings, and protested she should watch over and cherish her as a beloved sister.

In the night the poor invalid grew worse; she was attacked with a violent and dangerous fever, in the course of which, at length, reason entirely deserted her. It was only by means of force that she could be kept in bed. Her paroxysms during this period were shocking to behold. She acted over again, in imagination, the terrible scene which she had suffered in Berlin. She still seemed to wait and wait for the beloved husband who was never to return alive. She fancied she heard the hours strike ten—eleven—twelve—one, and at length that she beheld borne in the dead body of him who a few hours before had been her support, her refuge, her pride, her happiness, her hope. Again she kissed his pale lips, felt his cold bosom, and thought her fingers stained with his blood. Then she fancied that she had passed away from that dark scene and fatal hour. She was wandering about London—shrinking from police-officers—praying mercy of the licentious

and the intoxicated, and that they would not insult her—and at length she implored bread from the street-passengers.

“Ah! give me bread—only bread! Work? I cannot. Look at these arms! Cruel! he’s gone. Ah! madam, will *you* take pity on me? I am starving! A prison? For mercy’s sake, no!”

All the skill of the physician could not treat this state of excitement with much hope of recovery.

Early the next morning, leaving Mrs. Denham to the tender care of Ida, Claude went in his carriage to the shop of the shoemaker, whose address he had learned, and where his little favourite Ellen had been bound as an apprentice. It was a mean, low, dark, filthy shop, in a damp, narrow, blind alley. A brutal-looking man with a red nose, and harsh, appalling features, was tending the shop, while a shrewish woman, with a face sour as vinegar, had been examining the work of the little girl, who, pale and silent, in ragged and dirty clothes, sat by the window binding a shoe.

“It’s wretchedly done. It isn’t fit to be seen,” said the woman; “you little, lazy, good-for-nothing slut, take that!” And she gave her a blow upon the ears enough to make the child’s brain reel again.

“Ah! that’s right; it’s the only way to make anything of her.”

“It’s the best I could do,” said Ellen, in a voice so unhappy and resigned that it went to Claude’s heart.

“Silence, you vagabond. Do you bandy-words with *me* too?” said the man. “What can I do for you, sir?” said he, turning to Claude with a smile fit for a customer.

Ellen did not raise her eyes.

“I have come to see this little girl,” said Claude.

But the tones of his voice had no sooner reached Ellen’s ears, than she uttered an exclamation of acute surprise and joy, and lifted her eyes. On recognising him as he extended his arms, she started up with a scream of exquisite delight.

"Why, what on earth is in the child?" said the man, leaning over with a threatening countenance, and raising his hand to strike her.

But his arm was arrested by Claude, and the brutal tyrant was thrust with some force against the wall on the opposite side of the room.

"Zounds and fury, sir," cried the man, rushing forward with clinched fists, "if you were the king, I'd learn you better manners than that!"

"Stop, sir," said Claude, calmly but firmly grasping him by the throat; "you are a brutal, infamous, drunken scoundrel; you must *know* that such treatment as I have witnessed towards this little girl subjects you to severe punishment; and, if you advance farther, I shall be obliged to teach you on the spot a lesson you deserve to learn."

"Oh! Mr. Wyndham—dear, dear Mr. Wyndham—save me! save me from these cruel people!"

"Who are you, and what are your intentions?" demanded the man, his wrath and resistance entirely abated by the stern and cool attitude with which Claude had addressed him.

"There is my card," said Claude. "I have the power to make you rue what you have done; give me the articles of indenture of this little girl, and let me take her away, and I will let you go; otherwise I shall instantly take measures to have you punished."

"Your lordship's grace—is—the master—I did not know—the child can go where your grace's lordship likes—your worship."

"Yes—certainly—your honourable excellency will not wish to ruin two poor honest people," said the woman.

"Here are the articles," said the man, taking from a drawer, with hands trembling partly with intemperance and partly with rage and fear, the papers demanded.

"Come, my sweet Ellen," said Claude.

"And *my shoe!*" said the little girl, trembling and bewildered.

“Let them finish it themselves, my dearest child,” said Claude, smiling; “you will have other work, I hope.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

ONE more scene—the last which closes our story—was reserved for Claude, as if Providence had wished to teach, with the full force of contrast, the lesson which we have feebly endeavoured to illustrate by giving this true history to the world.

A few days afterward Claude received a visit from Lavallo. The joy which he felt on seeing him was checked by his sad air, his pale and thin face, and the melancholy betrayed in his appearance and actions.

“What is the matter with my best of friends?” said Claude.

“I am a fugitive from justice. I have killed a man. You have followed your principles, and I mine. You must know that Elkington, on leaving Berlin after Ida rejected him, had made use of expressions derogatory to her character. I determined to call him to account; but, knowing him to be a fatal shot, I practised with the pistol till I became as expert as he. I thought I should revenge your wrongs—Denham’s—Ida’s—and mankind’s, by pursuing and killing such a scourge to society. I had been also unhappy in my own affairs. The young lady whom I had engaged to marry betrayed me; and I thought, in case of my falling, there was no one who could mourn my loss. I therefore followed Elkington, and demanded of him an apology for the slander he had circulated against Ida. Perhaps it was more with the hope of falling myself than of killing my antagonist, for I was really *tired* and disgusted with life.”

"Against *Ida*! slander! ridiculous," said Claude.

"Nevertheless, he had done so; the words he uttered merited death; they were the blackest calumny a man could utter."

"And did you deem the poison from the foul lips of such a man worth your attention?"

"Yes; he refused to explain, and I called him out. We fought at Ostend. At the first fire he fell, mortally wounded. I fled to London. He still survives, but has been also brought over here. Since the event his mind has undergone a great change. He has become conscious of his baseness, and bitterly repents of it. His terror of a future world has been so great that it has driven him mad."

"Can such a man as Elkington fear a future world?" said Claude.

"Oh, yes, and more. I believe, from what I have heard, he is completely repentant. In his intervals of reason he has demanded to see both me and you. He says he cannot, he *will* not die till he has obtained our pardon. Of me, alas! he has nothing to ask; but I am wretched with the thought of what I have done. I did not know what it was to deprive a fellow-being of existence—to behold the suffering I have inflicted—the *death* I have caused. He deserved to die, but I am sorry *I* am his executioner. Will you see him?"

"I had rather not."

"It is his *desire* to see us both before he dies."

"Where is he?"

"I tremble to tell."

"Where? You frighten me!"

"In a *mad house*! In Bedlam."

"Gracious Heavens!"

"Deprived of his fortune, he was seized by creditors and stripped of everything. When he fought, he was without the means to live. Of this I knew nothing till subsequently. The physician says he will not, perhaps, last through the day. You *must* come instantly."

"I had rather not; strange feelings of indignation arise at the mention of that man's name; he is the murderer of my friend—"

"No matter; you will experience new emotions at the sight of him, but neither anger nor revenge will be among them."

"Indeed, I had rather not; it would look so like triumphing over a fallen enemy."

"No, it is to soothe, to oblige, to forgive a dying enemy. *I go*; it will give *me* much more pain."

"Come, then, *I will go*. I have no right to refuse."

They entered a carriage, and drove at once to the building where lay the fallen, the dying Elkington.

He was lying in a small whitewashed room, entirely destitute of furniture except the bed he lay on. His arms and hands were confined in that kind of dress they call a straight waistcoat, and a strap around his waist prevented his leaving the bed, or rising farther than in a sitting posture. His face was so dreadfully altered that it was with difficulty they recognised him. His hair, beard, and whiskers were unshorn, and had grown very long and ragged, and his eyes seemed of an unnatural size and brightness. Claude and Lavalie both turned pale with horror as they gazed on this object: Claude with horror and compassion, Lavalie with bitter self-reproach.

The poor wretch did not hear them come in. He was lying on his back, stretched out to his full length—his chin raised in the air—his head thrown back, and moving in sudden jerks, so as to describe a circle around the room with his eyes—from the floor—up the wall—over the ceiling—down to the floor again. This he repeated continually, with that monotony of motion peculiar to madness. Suddenly he exclaimed, in the most touching voice possible,

"Oh, God! how well—how well I know this place!"

Claude was thrilled to the soul with the pathos of that voice. A hidden quality of character appeared in

it ; a tenderness, a feeling, which he could not reconcile with the nature of the cold, malignant, bad man he had known and hated so.

" Yes—yes," he exclaimed, in the same grief-stricken, touching tones, " that I know full well !"

He threw up his eyes again, and measured the ceiling and walls with them, his head flung back in an agony of anguish.

" Well, well, we shall see—we shall see, in God's own good time ! Oh ! how I know this place—how *well* I know it !"

" Why, Elkington, my friend," said Claude, thrilling in every fibre of his frame, " how are you to-day ?"

He stopped suddenly, like one caught unexpectedly by observers when he was doing something he supposed in complete solitude, and he looked at the speaker fixedly, surprisedly, and sternly.

" How do you do, Mr. Wyndham ?" he said, almost in his natural voice.

" I have come to see you. I hope you are better, and that you have everything comfortable."

He gave another broad and stern gaze, which suddenly changed into a silent laugh ; then he closed one eye, and looked slyly with the other into the corner of the room, as if exchanging signs with some being there invisible to all but himself. Then he began once more the motion with his head—now laughing cunningly, as if chuckling over some secret—then pausing to measure his visitors from head to foot, with glances of such scorn and malice—of hate and ferocity—as made it evident that only his confinement kept them safe from his violence. These changes of countenance were appalling to behold. You could see through his face, as into a mirror, the workings of the disturbed sea beneath ; the wild, disjointed clouds drifting gloomily through his mind, sometimes breaking into a gleam of sunshine, then gathering over in stormy masses black as night.

" Ah ! Mr. Wyndham," he cried, suddenly, " we

want no dances; no, we had them *once*; we proved them well—*well*—ah ha! ah ha! ah ha!”

Unable to endure this frightful scene, Lavalley moved to go.

Elkington suddenly stopped.

“Don’t go—don’t go,” said he; “sit down—sit down—sit down on that bed—*lie* down on that bed.”

“We will—we will,” said Lavalley, shocked and trembling to behold the work of his rash hands, “we will come and sit with you often, dear Elkington.”

He laughed.

“You have a pleasant room,” said Claude.

He looked at him as if he would tear him into a thousand pieces.

“Clean and cool,” said Lavalley, in a tremulous voice, hoping, by assuming an indifferent air, to calm the agitation of his perturbed, wandering mind.

He fixed his glittering, wild, distended eyes on the speaker, as if he knew he was a hypocrite—as if he read his *soul*. Lavalley could not, without a painful effort, stand the unearthly glance. Then suddenly he smiled and said,

“Yes—cool!—*very!*”

With such another scornful glance—so full of hate—of malice—of sarcasm—that both the young men believed he *knew* he was mad, and hated them for pretending not to see the hellish wreck of his mind. Then he began to laugh, and mow, and wink at the invisible beings who seemed to hold unearthly communion with him in the corner.

The doctor came in as they stood beside this frightful spectacle.

“Will he live, doctor?” said Claude.

“No; to-morrow, at farthest, will carry him off.”

“Will he recover his reason?”

“No, probably not. He will sink rapidly after this excitement leaves him.”

“No rational communication with him?” asked Lavalley.

"Never again this side the grave," said the doctor. "Good-morning, gentlemen."

In the carriage Lavallo covered his face with his hands. He was of a livid whiteness.

"This horrible sight will never, never leave my mind," said he; "to think that this hand has hurled that wretched being into his present state. Oh! how much I wish I had followed your wiser counsel—your example."

"He struck me," said Claude, "and I thanked God every moment I was there that I had turned from his blood and left his punishment to Heaven. Believe me, my friend, He who placed us in this mysterious world meant we should govern our rash passions which betray us into such errors, and that our hands should rather be lifted in humble supplication for mercy to Him than be plunged into the—"

"Spare me, Wyndham, spare me! I would give all I am worth in life to wipe that rash, bad act from my conscience."

The next day brought news of Elkington's death, and nearly at the same hour Mrs. Denham breathed her last. Lavallo left England and stayed many years abroad. It is even said he once received a gross public insult from a young blood, for which he refused to seek redress by a duel. Lady Beverly also remained all her life abroad. She received from the generosity of Claude a sufficient amount to allow her to live as she had been accustomed to. The old Jew who had possessed himself of such a heavy mortgage on the Beverly estates by the necessities of Elkington, was some years afterward brought to punishment and transported. He confessed that, in order to retain the estate in Elkington's right, he had employed an assassin to pursue Claude, having discovered his claim before Elkington himself. The Digbys, on their return from

Berlin, so far from being cured of their *penchant* for "déjoonies dong-song" and the "ho-tong," came to be very stylish people in their way. Miss Mary appeared in society some years afterward as *Madame la Comtesse Lippe*, that gentleman having married her, and now flourished among the admiring and envying company of the Digbys as a French count ruined by the revolution.

Thomson returned to England and acquired quite a reputation by killing a poor French officer in a duel, because he said, in very bad English, "Jean Bull was a bear!" He, however, fell off, in his latter years, into a mere gambler, his idle love of whist having taken a deeper hue. Notwithstanding his gallant feat with the aforesaid French officer, he was horsewhipped and had his nose tweaked by a little man at whose house he was once playing a friendly rubber of whist; and who, after having been beaten regularly all the evening, caught him at a trick which exposed the secret. Should we ever take up the story again, there are several other explanations which we shall feel ourselves bound to make to the reader; but we must not omit to state, that the very pretty *Miss Kühl*, from whose power Claude had been obliged to withdraw, lest his interesting and amiable manners should prove too much for her, appeared in London, in the course of a few months after his union with Ida, as the lady of an extremely handsome young Russian officer, named *Count Stroggonoffenhoff*, and made a very good appearance by the side of the young Countess Beverly. Indeed, Claude and Strogg—that is, her husband—became great friends; and from the care the young man took to present his beautiful bride to Claude, and to inform him who she was, &c., it was evident that, although a tolerably well-informed man, he did not know everything that had happened in Europe during this eventful century.

Should there be other points which we have failed to clear up—characters of whose fates we have said

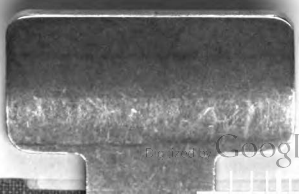
nothing—mysteries which we have not satisfactorily unravelled, or, in short, anything whatever, in the volumes which we now bring to a conclusion, which may appear in the least improbable, we can only assure the reader that, by informing us of the same, we will consult the MS. in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, under the care of *Mr. Spiker*, the courteous and learned librarian ; and we pledge ourselves that all such disputed matters shall be immediately and satisfactorily put right.

THE END.

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