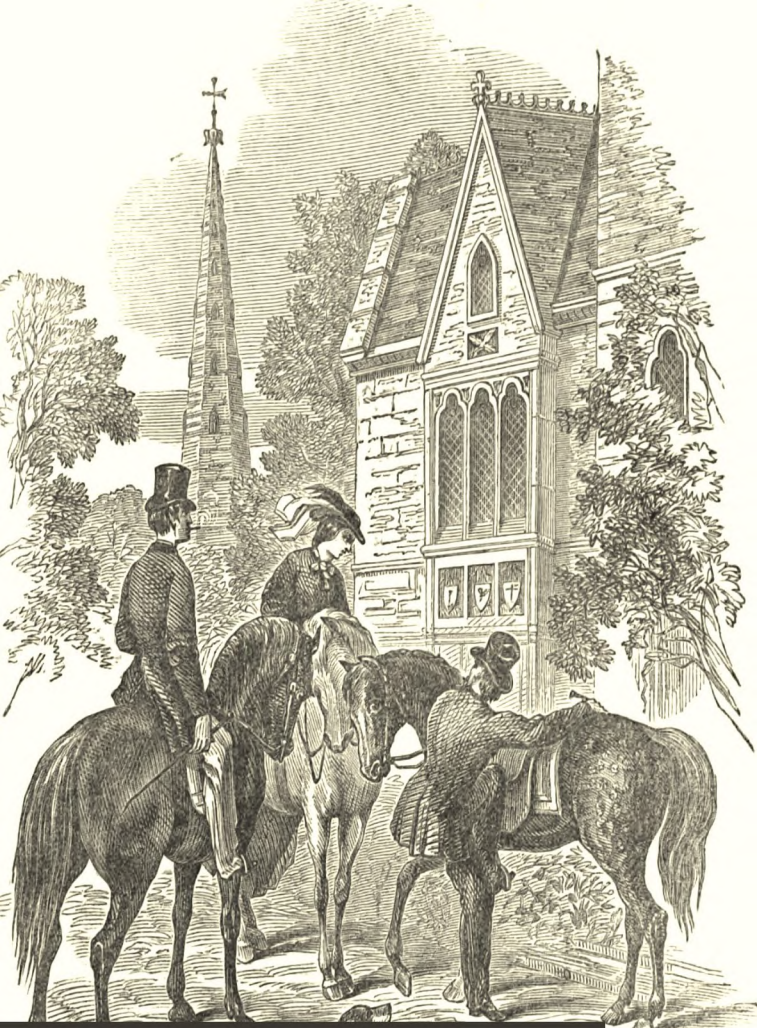

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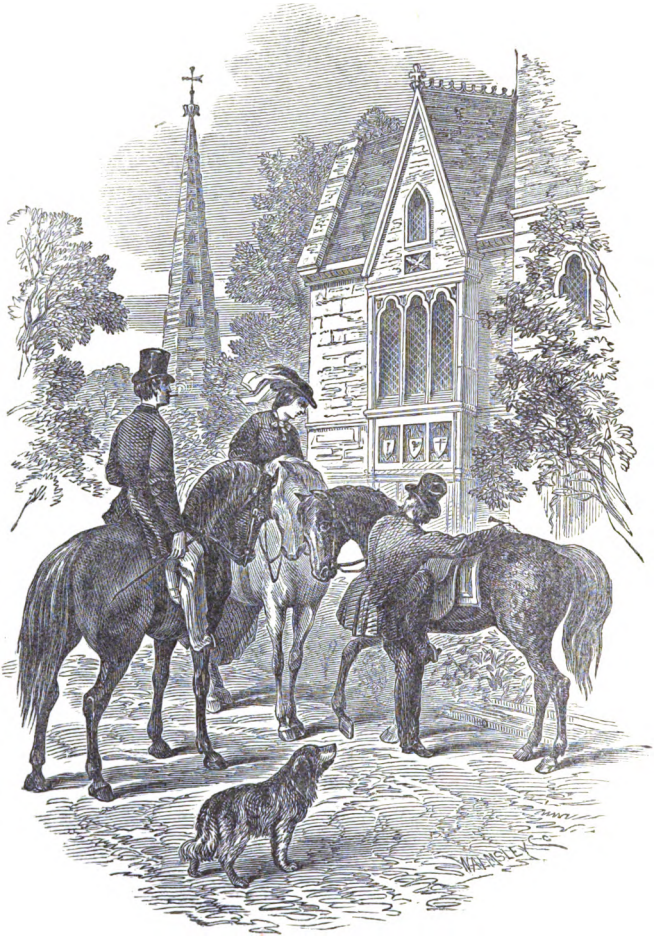

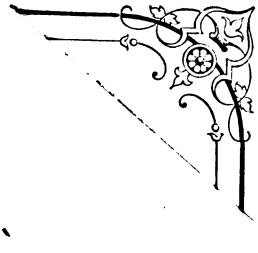

THE

OLD PARISH CHURCH:

WITH THE

GHOST OF MERTON HALL.

By JOHN GIBBS.

"Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free."

"Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again."

London:

WARD & LOCK, 158, FLEET-STREET.

1861.

TO

THE REV. LORD SAYE AND SELE, D.C.L.,

OF BROUGHTON CASTLE, OXON,

THIS VOLUME

IS

BY PERMISSION

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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Prefatory Address.

I KNOW not how much credence will be given to the statements in my tale of "The Old Parish Church, with the Ghost of Merton Hall;" yet, for the most part, they are founded upon facts, and such as will ever be interesting and instructive.

For obvious reasons, however, all the names of persons represented in the tale must be regarded as entirely fictitious.

Time is always of too much value to be wasted; so that, rather than trouble the reader with a long preface about myself or any body else, I will simply invite him to take a seat in some snug corner for a quiet reading of the following pages.

But I must observe that this is a sharp go-ahead age, and to cope with it—whether in writing, reading, or arithmetic, one requires all the acuteness of the Yankee, the *politesse* of the Frenchman, and the where-

withal of an Englishman. As of old, however, it would be well for all of us to remember that he is the happiest man who can smile to-day upon the acts of yesterday.

"Let us speak our free hearts each to other," says Shakspeare: And why not? Indeed, did we but more often speak and act upon this principle, how many sorrows would cease! How many joys would come!

Look up, man! Look up, woman! for, dark as some have painted this world of ours, it has many bright and sunny spots, and the smile of Heaven is upon them. But we must all work—expand the sympathies of our hearts—be courageous, noble, loving, and free—then earth will be to us a Paradise, the very Eden of peace and beauty. And while we have within us the germ from which great and glorious achievements may oftener spring, so is it our duty, as it ought to be our delight, to develope it—that life may be worth the living, and that we and our handy-work may become more intelligent and beautiful, and more worthy the notice and approbation of the Creator. Pilgrims though we are, the simplest mind can understand that a smooth road, pleasant company, and something cheerful to look at on the way, are things which none should despise; yet how often does one see his fellow-traveller—alas! how often does one find oneself—taking the wrong road!

Nature and Art are only in harmony when the latter is all beauty; and as all our conceptions either please or disgust—elevate or debase—let it be our

aim, whatever we are, to make all things beautiful. The Great Architect of the Universe has placed us here for wise and glorious purposes ; and as He has given us the earth, the sea, the forest, the air, and all we have and are, let us not fail to show our gratitude by using them for each other's good, and at all times and seasons.

Whatever may be said to the contrary, I would have every man study the Christian religion, politics, law, art, music, and all that is essential to the general well-being of himself and society. Because a man happens to be poor or ignorant, is he just to himself by remaining so ? Is his rich neighbour just in trying to keep him poor or ignorant ? It is the duty of every man to exalt himself, and to do the best he can for his brother. He is a selfish and miserable man who will not contribute to the happiness of his fellow. It were well if men studied the principles of equity more : law may not be so capricious as fashion ; but equity, which is the soul of justice, cannot change. Now the machinery of all human affairs should be based upon the principles of equity : that they are often found otherwise, however, I need not attempt to prove in this address ; and surely if ever there was an age when progression was developed by antagonism, this must be the one. After all, men never did, and never will thoroughly agree, and for the very reason that they are differently constituted both in mind and body. Nevertheless, differ as they may, it is evident that none but the stupid and selfish would deny to a brother a just share of what was meant to be good and common to all.

Although I admire much of the spirit and character of the people of my country, and willingly acknowledge the dignity of many of its institutions and laws, I yet maintain that England—Christian England, as it is called—is very far from being what it ought to and might be. Some of its great troubles and burdens, however, are unavoidable, and sometimes even necessary; indeed, it would seem that our contentions with foreign powers are rather like correctional movements, or wise interferences, than otherwise. We must admit, too, the necessity which there is for checking the growth of powers whom we cannot, dare not trust. It would be wrong to believe that the people of England delight in war, or that they desire to affect the real interests, and well-being of any foreign people; but, knowing as they do, that their religion is natural and true, and that all may prosper where trade and commerce are carried on upon equitable principles, they desire, and are right in enforcing, a world-wide free trade. The religious, moral, and social principles of the people of England might be generally taken as a standard in every land without fear of failure, because they are for the most part theoretically and practically correct. It is not the fault of the principles we acknowledge, that we are what we are, but of the many of us who do not adhere to and carry them out. At present, however, it will be the policy of England to preserve her strength at home and abroad, and to make her warlike name a terror to all despots, inasmuch as most of the great European powers would secretly rejoice were she now tottering upon the preci-

pice of destruction, and she and her religion be no more known. But, thank God, be her destiny what it may, there is yet something more than hope in her, or she would be presently a ruin. Small as our island is, it is yet full of bone and sinew, yet full of energy, bravery, and independence. We have seen and do now see, that not only are the youthful sons of Britain willing and ready to defend all that is noble and dear to them and theirs, (should they be so called upon,) but men advanced in years—fathers, whose grey hairs tell that though the meridian of life is past with them, are also to be seen bearing arms, and for the same common purpose. The smile of Heaven is upon our country; and this and our privileges, with all that is dear to us and our homes, nothing short of loyalty, honour, and integrity will preserve and maintain. As a people we desire to civilize, to cultivate, to trade, and to Christianize. These are specific objects with us. We do not wish to enthral, to enslave, to brutalize; but to ennoble, to exalt, to make wise. I take this to be the general character of my countrymen, who desire to be free, confiding, happy, and to offer the hand of friendship to the whole world. But, much as we may cry "Peace," it cannot yet be, nor will it till the great majority of mankind become Christian, and of such sort as would do as they would be done by. As for the dogmas of Rome, may they speedily perish!

How much is implied in the words "hard times!" Folly and misfortune, alas! often meet one's gaze; and if these constitute the principal elements of hard times,

let none be too proud or too cowardly to consider how both may be avoided. Man should reason within himself, or, in other words, calculate how his present conduct will affect him in years to come.

The comparatively short time we poor mortals can remain on earth ought not to be forgotten. At longest, life is but very short; it ought not therefore to be spent in vain regrets or murmurings, but happily, joyfully, pleasantly. It is better to tune our harps, and strike the strings in harmony with sweet voices, than to hang them upon the branches of the willow, and to sit down in solitary sadness, and weep. The past is unalterable to us; words and deeds cannot be recalled; works cannot be undone; yet, if we would welcome the future, even though it be but a year, a week, a day, let us prepare to hail it as the gift of the Creator, and so live that we shall be happy in ourselves, and with those around us. True, "this is a world of change;" but is it not ourselves who make it so? Is it not we, its inhabitants, who trouble one another? Nay, tell me not that we were born to live a life of sin and misery, that our end would be as our beginning, or earth would then be hell, and heaven a mockery! We are born for good or evil, and our destiny is what we make it. What that destiny is we know not; but certain are we of right and wrong, reward or punishment. Under any circumstances, life is an awfully solemn fact. And even were there no hereafter, so lofty is man in intellect, so fine in feeling, and so beautiful in form, that one should scorn to do anything by which that intellect would be clouded or undevelop-

ed, by which that feeling would be pained or crushed, or by which that beauty of form would be mutilated or rendered unsightly. But, alas ! one is sometimes startled by the creation of iniquities so monstrous and vile, that one can scarcely believe this intellectual and beautiful being called man to be the same that enacts those iniquities ! But he is ; and how often is he seen spilling the blood of the innocent ; ravaging cities, and laying waste their walls; tyrannizing over and robbing the industrious poor ; scheming plots to entrap and ruin a brother ; yes, and inventing language and deeds such as Satan himself could scarcely outrival !

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stranger to all there, my friend excepted. Upon being introduced to his family, my hand was heartily shaken by father, mother, and sister—the latter of whom, however, all blushing and fair, soon after retired from the room, nor did I again see her till the next morning at breakfast. I was at once sorry and perplexed that she did not return, and began to think that I had either said or done something at which she was displeased; however, before I retired to rest, I found I had made the acquaintance of a family worthy of my highest esteem, and therefore ventured to acquit myself of having been the cause of Miss Whitworth's not returning to the room. Still, as might have been natural with any other young man, I could not forget the circumstance, and must confess that my sleep was less refreshing that night in consequence.

I arose with the sun, and eagerly scanned the new prospect which was presented to my view. The first object that attracted my attention was the venerable and majestic old church of Walton; and as it was yet early, I took my pencil and made a rough but effective sketch of the whole scene, which, as seen from the window of the room where I had slept, is unequalled by any of a similar kind I have yet beheld.

I had nearly completed my toilet when my friend Whitworth came to my door for admittance, and to enquire how I had slept. I told him I was all right, and ready for breakfast, and hoped he was in the same humour. Seeing my sketch, however, he compared it with the splendid copy, and pronounced it admirable. We descended to the breakfast-room together, and found the Vicar, with his wife and daughter, grouped round the fire, and waiting our presence to commence the morning meal; seeing which, I quickly apologised for not coming down earlier, when my friend—who preferred being called

Harry, and by which name we shall in future know him—immediately held up the sketch I had made of the church, and cried out to me—

"Melton! no apologies, if you please; for you have made the best sketch of Walton old church I ever saw, and while every one here was fast asleep."

"Beautiful, beautiful!" said Miss Whitworth, as she examined it.

"But who is to have this beautiful drawing; for it must never leave here, if I can help it?" cried the Vicar.

"Harry, Harry," replied I, "you really ought not to have brought down this hasty sketch, for it is only fit for an architect's scrap-book; nevertheless, if you think it worth keeping, I will finish it before I leave, and make another for myself."

"Keep it I certainly shall, you may depend," said Harry, "and hold you as hostage till I see it framed and hung up in our drawing-room."

"That's right, my son," said the Vicar, and I give you credit for the idea."

"Well, really, Mr. Whitworth," said his wife; "Mr. Melton may have a great desire to possess this picture, especially after the loss of many hours' sleep on purpose to make it."

"Madam," said I, "your son is quite welcome to it; and I only regret that it is not more worthy of the praises so unexpectedly bestowed upon it."

"Thanks, thanks," cried Harry; "and if you should find that you have not time to take one for yourself, I will just pick out the best I can find from my sister's sketch book, and—"

"Harry!" said Miss Whitworth, rather sharply, "how dare you talk of my sketch-book now, for I do not pretend to the art of sketching."

"Oh, well—never mind," cried Harry; "it will please Melton, for he likes any body's sketches

rather than his own, and especially when they are coloured: Is it not so, Melton?"

"You are quite right, Harry: but I would not for the world rob your sister of one of her favourite sketches, glad as I should be if I might carry one off of her free good-will."

"Oh, wouldn't you," said Harry. "Well, then, I must steal one for you myself. But what do you say to my sketching it?"

"But you cannot even copy a dove-cote, my son, much less a church," said the Vicar; at which expression we all laughed, particularly Harry.

The smell of broiled ham, coffee, tea, and other good things that were now brought into the room, aroused the attention of the Vicar, who desired us to take breakfast, and then prepare for a drive. I enjoyed the meal, and felt that I had fallen in with a very kind and highly intelligent family. I was grateful for the attentions I received, and endeavoured to appear so. But my sketch was not forgotten, nor would they let the subject drop even after a promise which I made to complete it to the best of my ability; but was renewed by Harry, in the first place, and then taken up with various degrees of warmth by one and all assembled. I observed that sketching had been a very interesting amusement to me ever since I was at school; that it had materially helped to improve my taste in matters of art, and to impress upon my mind the history of the objects and places my pencil had traced. I also spoke of the many and beautiful views which Oxford and its vicinity abound in, and of the advantage I had taken during my residence there to copy some few of those I liked most. And I may here remark, that among most educated minds there are undisguised evidences of a taste for art, even little as such taste may have been cultivated; and while mine for the Gothic was ren-

dered stronger and more lasting by my stay in Oxford, I must not forget that other styles have their peculiar beauties, grandeur, and utility, all of which should be borne in mind by the student of architecture. But more of this hereafter.

It was now eleven o'clock; and the Vicar, who was a good horseman, said—

"Well, Mr. Melton, we must now arrange about a run into the country. Where shall we go, Harry?"

"Nay, father," cried Harry, "you are the best judge, for I have only recently been in these parts: You forget that I have been at school all my life."

"True, my son; nor have I forgotten that you are neither bishop, judge, nor general, yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry; and then said—"but I will be"—

"What?" cried his anxious mother.

"Why, an M.P.," said Harry, with firmness.

"Hear, hear!" I exclaimed; while the Vicar said "Amen."

"But what about the drive out?" asked Harry, as he looked from one to the other of us.

"Well," replied the Vicar, "suppose we go to Merton Hall, and take luncheon with Lady Sutton; we shall be just in time, and I know that her Ladyship will be delighted to see us, especially as we can introduce fresh news from Oxford to her; her son, Lord Sutton, being now at Christ Church."

"But we cannot all go, Vicar," said his wife; "besides, her Ladyship dines here to-morrow, if you remember, as it will be the anniversary of our wedding day."

"Pardon me, my dear wife," cried the Vicar, "but I had temporarily forgotten the invitation, and—"

"The keeping of the anniversary, too, I suppose,"

continued his wife, a little piqued at his forgetfulness.

"Well—not exactly," replied the Vicar, musingly; "but as I generally leave all such matters entirely in your hands, my dear wife, why of course I am all the more free to attend to others."

"A very capital excuse," said the good wife; "but as such happens to be the case, I must beg you to leave me at home to-day, for I always like to superintend the making of the little dishes for our table myself, as you well know."

"Just so—very true," was the Vicar's reply; and then, not wishing his own abilities to remain unknown to me, he added—"We are both famous in our way; you in the house, and I"—

"In the church," said his wife, proudly—concluding the sentence for him.

"Well, well—be it as you like," replied the Vicar, pretending not to relish the praise, yet unable to hide a smile it occasioned him.

"But I want to be off, and don't care how soon," said Harry, as he opened a drawer, and took therefrom a couple of pretty little riding whips.

"Do not be in too great a hurry, my boy," cried the Vicar. "But how are we to travel, since I see you with two whips?"

"Why, Melton and I will take the two greys, and you and Mary can ride in the carriage," said Harry, as he handed me one of the whips.

"What!" cried the Vicar, in well-feigned astonishment, "would you deprive me of my grey pet, and seat me in a lumbering carriage behind the old hunter? No, no, Master Harry, that will not do; I am not going to make a call upon Lady Sutton in any such style, you may depend."

"Ha, ha, ha!" was Harry's reply, keeping up the joke; while his sister, somewhat impatient at the delay, declared that he was the most impudent

fellow she had ever seen. After some little further delay, however, during which my friend was most provokingly merry in his remarks, a Mr. Copewell, the Æsculapius of the parish, a man of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, was announced. We were introduced to each other, but, as his business was of importance, he and the Vicar left the room, so that our course was as yet unsettled. Scarcely a moment had elapsed, however, when the Vicar returned to say that we might have the greys, and the hunter too, and that he should be unavoidably detained with the Doctor for some time, and could not, therefore, accompany us.

"Some election business, I'll bet any thing," said Harry, as soon as the Vicar had disappeared, "or the Doctor would not have such a lot of papers in his hand!"

"Why, you are always thinking about electioneering business, Harry, when any gentleman calls to speak a private word to the Vicar, just as if that should constitute the sole object of your life," said his mother, a little perplexed at the hurried manner of the Doctor.

"All right—I know all about it," cried the would-be candidate; "and I quite believe that Copewell would secure all his patients' votes for me, even at the sacrifice of the worth of twelve months' medicine and attendance; for he has plenty of money, I hear, and will—"

"No, my son," said his mother, "he will not spend money about electioneering matters, unless—But never mind now, for you had better order the carriage, or you will be late."

"Carriage!" cried Harry; "not this time, my dear mother; for as our party is now reduced to three persons only, I am bound to propose that we all go on horseback. What say you, Mary?"

"I should prefer it, Harry, but only on condition that I have father's grey pet, and—"

"Mr. Melton the other, if you like," suggested he, laughing.

"As you please," cried I; while Miss Whitworth, neither vexed nor pleased at her brother's remarks, hastened off to put on her hat and riding-habit. The Vicar and the Doctor bade us a hasty good morning, and Harry and I went round to the stable to look at the horses, which were quickly saddled, and brought round to the porch. We had to wait a short time for Miss Whitworth, however, which caused Harry to declare that he could dress twenty times while his sister was dressing once. I laughed at the impatience he exhibited upon the occasion, and then, quoting his father's words, said "Don't be in too great a hurry, my boy." Just as he was about to light his cigar, Miss Whitworth appeared in the hall, and was putting on her gloves, when I at once went forward to meet her, and assisted her to mount. Our steeds seemed pleased with their riders, and went off with a right good gallop. Harry took the lead, however, at which I was not at all displeased, for I felt immensely elevated in spirits by the companionship of his beautiful sister, whose fine figure I had never seen surpassed. There was a light swing gate across the road which leads from the Vicarage to Merton Hall, and, as Harry was first, we concluded that he would hold it open till we had passed. But in this respect we were deceived; for as soon as the old hunter which he rode saw the gate, he went off at a dashing speed to clear it, and, in doing so, pitched Harry clean over the adjoining hedge into a ploughed field, and then, as we imagined, bolted off home another way as fast as he could go.

Of course, Miss Whitworth and I concluded that his neck was broken. I opened the gate, rushed

through to the hedge, and was eagerly looking for a gap, when Harry, who was unhurt, cried out—

"Melton! What do you think of the old hunter?"

"Never mind the old hunter," said I; "Are you hurt? Tell me—quickly!"

"Not a bit," said he, cheerfully; "but my hat has got so far and so firmly driven over my head that I cannot get it off: Why the deuce don't you come over and help me, for I cannot see where I am?"

"But I do not see any opening," I replied: "How am I to get over this high hedge?"

"Why, the same way as I did, to be sure!"

"No, Harry, that will never do; let me remount and ride on till I find a side-gate, and then come down to your help."

I was about to carry out my intention, when he cried out that he had got his hat off, and was now all right. I was very glad that what he said was true, and to see his sister so really thankful and pleased at his escape from injury. We had a short parley as to what had better be done under the circumstances, when Miss Whitworth proposed that we should at once return home, or the presence of the bold hunter at the Vicarage would create suspicions of a very unpleasant nature. Harry was yet behind the hedge, however, which was so thick that I could scarcely see him. After telling him to walk back till he could find an opening by which he could come out into the road, I and Miss Whitworth rode gently opposite to him till he could present himself. He appeared at last, and a very pretty figure he cut: his hat was crushed, his coat burst all down the back, and himself and his clothes generally covered with the soft earth upon which the old hunter had deposited him. After his sister and I had satisfied ourselves that he really was not hurt, we complimented him upon his pluck, and were quietly returning to the Vicarage, when the

sound of horses' hoofs from behind us attracted our attention. We halted for a moment, and, to our great surprise, who should be coming up but the old hunter, in charge of a groom from Merton Hall, to which place we had started. Harry was quite delighted to find that the horse had not gone to the Vicarage, as, without a rider, he would greatly have alarmed his parents. We had a capital laugh at the tale which the groom told us of the runaway, who, he said, had crossed the park clearing all before him in splendid style as he went, until, as in his earlier years, he stood before the front entrance to the Hall, ready to be mounted by his old master for the field. He looked none the worse for his run. I remarked that it was a pity so good a horse was not kept for hunting only, when the groom said—

"Yes, Sir; but you see he can't follow up the sport above an hour or so, Sir, and then he drops down just like a dead hoss, Sir. He can't hunt now, Sir, but he's a very useful feller for quiet work."

"Did you see him cross the park?" asked Harry.

"No, Sir," replied the groom, "but my Lady did; and I think her Ladyship seemed very sorry as I was bringin' him off here, for she patted him on the shoulder and stroked his mane so."

"Dear Lady Sutton!" ejaculated Miss Whitworth, with a sigh.

I now enquired if the horse was a favourite with Lady Sutton? when the groom replied—

"Yes, Sir, but only on account of his late master, who is dead. Shall I take the hoss on, Sir, or will you, Sir?" continued the groom, now addressing Harry.

"Oh! I'll manage him, thank you," cried Harry, tossing his head, and pitching the man a crown.

"Now, Harry," observed Miss Whitworth, "do take care, or you will be thrown again, and perhaps killed."

"All right!" said Harry, as he again took the lead on the old hunter.

We trotted along quite gaily once more; and, not to be done out of a good ride, Harry proposed a run of four or five miles along another road, but his sister and I objected to such a course until he had returned home for another hat and coat. He overruled us, however, and away we went, pell-mell, the old hunter always first, until we were nearing another gate, when Harry, who had no desire for a second fall, pulled up, and we all turned off for the Vicarage. On we went again, full run, Harry delighted with his crushed hat and torn coat, and crying out every now and then—"Tally-ho! Tally-ho!" until within a mile or two of Walton, when—as the groom had predicted—down went the old hunter, and Harry was once more *hors de combat!* Again I had to dismount, but under more serious circumstances, as Miss Whitworth, now thoroughly alarmed, had jumped from her horse, and lay fainting on the ground. "Confound all old hunters," said I; but there was no time to give expression to such another idea, so I quickly picked him up, and, finding that he had only got a good shaking, I seated him on the stump of an old tree, and then went to his sister. By sundry little attentions on my part she soon came round, when Harry, who was less hurt than I imagined, asked me in an impatient manner if his sister had been thrown. I said No, but that she had fainted upon seeing him fall.

"Ha, ha, ha! Capital! It's all right," said he, seeing his sister had nearly recovered.

I replied by saying—"But how will you get the old hunter up?"

"Oh, I'll show you the way," he continued, tucking up his coat-sleeves, and proving beyond dispute that he was unhurt.

Before the horse was got up, however, we had to endure a little suspense. Fortunately, we were near to a farm-house; seeing which, I recommended Harry to go to it, and obtain help. He did so, and a man and a boy returned with him.

"Jupiter! Jupiter!" cried the man, speaking to the horse, "how is it ye are down here? Come, get up!"

"What!" cried Harry, "you know the horse?"

"I should think I did, too!" said the man, with a look of astonishment; "and, if I'm not much out on't, I do know thee too!"

"How so?" said Harry.

"Well," the old man cried, "as far as the hoss goes, I may say as how I should never have had this here crooked leg but for his boltin' tricks; and as for thee, why, bless my soul, any body might swear that that beautiful lady on that there grey was thy sister, even if I didn't know thee to be as bold and dashin' as this 'ere hoss used to be. You Oxford chaps be rum uns."

"Capital, capital!" cried I, while Harry laughed most outrageously. "But," continned I, "let us get Jupiter up. Do you think he is hurt?"

"Hurt!" shouted the old man; "not a bit on't; he knows as well when he's goin' to fall as a lady does when she's goin' to have a fit of faintin', and gets ready for't accordin'ly."

"You are a good fellow, I can see," said Harry; "and after we have got Jupiter upon his legs, you may take him to the Vicarage stables, and there wait for me, when I will make you a present of this hat and coat and five shillings."

"You be very very good, Sir; but the hoss aint had enough rest yet; and as for goin' to take him to the stables—why I don't mind that, although my master might grumble at me for doin' on't, 'cause he don't like the tories, and that's what the Vicar

and you be, and this 'ere gent too," alluding to myself, "or else he wouldn't be a gallopin' about by the side of old Jupiter, for he's a tory all over—eh, Master Henry ?"

"Well, not exactly, my man," was Harry's reply; "but what side does your master take—is he a liberal ?"

"Liberal ! no, by gosh ! I wish he knew how to be : but he don't. He's as hard as a frozen swede to deal with, but as soft as a biled turmot when he's a talkin'."

"What is he, then ?" I asked.

"Well, I'll tell ye : he's a reg'lar radical, farmer, and local preacher, and does a bit in the lawyerin' way for them as don't like the reg'lar sort."

"A knowing kind of fellow, I'll be bound," continued I.

"Aye, that he is, and as sharp as a peaked-nosed Yankee."

"And are you a radical, too ?" asked Miss Whitworth, looking down upon the old man with great interest.

"No, young lady, not I ; for I've a great likin' for old English institootions, and don't mind a trifle out of my bit of money now and then to keep our old church from gettin' shabby ; for I likes to look at it, it looks so mighty great and nat'ral like, partic'larly when the parson is as good as the architecture and orgin-music. I'd sooner have a reg'lar parson, if he's a good sort, and not above his callin', than a dozen of them bawlin' radical local preachers, for they be always tellin' people they'll go to hell for enjoyin' themselves, instead of telling 'em to do their dooty, and make one another as happy as they can. It's no use sayin' what I don't mean, so I tell ye as how I be a reg'lar constitootioner, and that's it. I knows what's dooty, and likes what's fair o' both sides ; but some of

these meetiners don't, for they wants it all their way, which shows they bain't a bit lib'ral, and didn't ought to be trusted too much."

"Well done, old man," cried Harry; "I am very glad we have found you out, and to hear you say that you like to give your mite towards keeping the old church in repair, which shows that you have good taste in addition to your good opinions."

"After all, you must call men by their right names, and do as you would be done by," I observed.

"That's just my principle, Sir, and not a bit more, I can tell ye."

"Very good—very good," said I, patting the old man on the shoulder; "but you must not call us tories exactly, for I believe we hold broader views of right than some do who bear that name, and are, therefore—"

"Liberal-tories!" shouted Harry, raising his crushed hat high in the air.

"Good!" continued I, pleased with his definition, and in turn raising my hat likewise aloft.

The old man was well pleased with what we had said, and gave a hearty cheer for the liberal-tories, at which Miss Whitworth was immensely pleased, while Harry and I indulged in a hearty good laugh —caused, however, more by the quaint grinning of the boy who stood by the old man than by anything else.

"But," shouted the old man, as if anxious to fix his principles further upon us, "I like to work for what I has, then I be independent of tories or radicals either, and that's it. However, whatever I be, the Vicar's very good to me, and to the old woman too."

"I see—I see," replied I, looking intently at the old man; "like Jupiter, you are an old favourite—eh?"

"Well, I spose I be, but I shouldn't like to be run down in my old age, and have all the wind knocked out o' me, like this 'ere old hoss."

"Very true—very true," said I; while Harry, who had roared with laughter at this sally of the old man, now cried out—

"Look out, Melton! or Jupiter will give you a poke or two with his sceptre which you won't forget in a hurry, for he is about to rise."

I did not require a second warning, but stood off while the animal got up; and then, with Harry, the old man and boy helped to make him as decent as was possible under the circumstances. To old Jupiter's credit he recovered rapidly, and held up his head and ears as proudly as when Lady Sutton's groom handed him over to Harry, who, seeing him all right, mounted him a third time, so that we all returned to the Vicarage as we had left—on horseback. We dismounted and entered.

Tired and hungry, we were about to prepare for dinner, when the Vicar and his wife, delighted to find we had returned, came from the drawing-room into the hall to congratulate us on our safe arrival, and, at the same time, to reprimand Harry for his recklessness—of which, by some means, they had heard. But he was in no humour to discuss the subject, so the Vicar, followed by his wife, retreated from our presence, and we ran off to dress for the forthcoming and much-desired dinner. I did my best to be ready first, but failed, for Harry came to my door before I had half finished, and said he was ready to go down. I opened the door, and asked him to wait for me; he did so, but grumbled most desperately at the pains I took with my hair, neck-tie, and other matters; for, said he, "There will be nobody here to-day whom you have not seen, so what does it matter?" I thought otherwise, for I was about to sit opposite to or by

the side of a woman whom above all others I liked most, and whom I intended, if possible, to win and make my bride. With such thoughts uppermost in my mind, one cannot wonder that I was anxious to appear before her to the best advantage. My friend knew not the secret feelings of my heart, however, nor did I at present betray them. After a few minutes in the drawing-room, we went to dinner. I was seated opposite to the being who charmed me, and felt gloriously happy in surveying her beautiful figure, but infinitely more so when I saw the approving smile which followed the little attentions I had the honour of paying her. I saw they were welcome, and—Oh, how I loved her! "What will be my fate," thought I; "she is young, beautiful, loving. Oh, that this dinner were over, for I long to know if she can sing; and if she can, my voice—my heart—my soul—shall sing with hers, and know no change till death." Had I been alone with Miss Whitworth, I believe I should thus early have ventured to give expression to my feelings; but it was not so, nor did I know whether she had not already given her heart to another. I hoped otherwise, and thought and acted as one who believed so. After dinner we retired to the drawing-room, in which a fire of unusual cheerfulness burned in a peculiar but grand old fire-place. The Vicar and his wife sat on either side, while I and Miss Whitworth, aided by Harry, briefly detailed the events of the day. I said that my *debût* at Walton would not be forgotten by me, when Harry, who now felt stiff and sore in his limbs, cried out—

"Nor I, neither; for Jupiter was well-nigh sending me to my forefathers, and before I had arranged to go."

"Harry—Harry!" spoke his father, "it ill becomes the son of the Vicar of Walton to speak thus;

I do not object to an occasional joke, but I abhor levity."

"I shall remember that when I am Speaker in the House of Commons," cried Harry, with a laugh.

"You are a saucy fellow, Harry," said Mrs. Whitworth; "but hand me a glass of wine."

"With pleasure, my dear mother," cried he, with a smile; "and one to myself at the same time, for I think it would help to remove the stiffness in my shoulder."

"I doubt that, my son," cried the Vicar, "for Bacchus cannot remove the bruises which Jupiter, his father, has made."

"Capital! good—very good!" cried Harry, who was pleased with his father's wit; "and now let us see what Apollo can do, for I should much enjoy a little music."

"Nothing could be better," said the Vicar: "Do you sing, Mr. Melton?"

"I do, Sir; but mine is a bass voice."

"So much the better," said the Vicar, "for mine is a tenor; and, with my daughter's soprano, we will have a trio."

"But do you not sing yet?" asked I, addressing Harry.

"Not to music," he replied.

"For which I am extremely sorry," observed Miss Whitworth, "for he has a good voice, and a perfect ear."

"And I, too," cried the Vicar; "for I consider the practice of music a most charming and intelligent amusement. Most people like it; but few—very few, comparatively, can either sing or play well. Now this is a misfortune, Mr. Melton; because, really and truly, the practice of good music in the domestic circle may generally be looked upon as a blessing. At all events, I am glad that I learned

music, and that, even in my little way, I am enabled occasionally to amuse myself and my friends. And often, when I have been discomforted in my mind, have I gone to that instrument," pointing to a piano which stood in the room, "and played myself free of trouble, or at least of—of—"

"A little ill-humour, my dear," said his wife, making the confession for him.

"Besides," resumed the Vicar, "the practice of good music is productive of much general good; and not only to the body, but also to the soul. I love music: it elevates the mind, and gives me a foretaste of the bliss of heaven. When I would rejoice as a Christian, I sing and play; and the words of my song, according to the season or hour, are sometimes my prayer, and I am satisfied. The spirit of song, when purest, is divine. And when I hear another sing or play, the sympathies of my heart are enlarged, and I feel that even this world, with all its cares and troubles, is no unfit place for the temporary residence of a soul that may have aspirations not greatly inferior to those which are inherent in the angels of light. But, Mr. Melton, while I would exalt the merits of sacred music, do not think that I despise what is called secular. No, Sir, I am not, I hope, opposed to any thing that is rational, and can therefore take my part in, and enjoy, a sensible and good song. Mary, let us try an instrumental duet, while you, Mr. Melton, select a piece from either of these two books."

Their playing was exquisite. I was well pleased with the Vicar's arrangement, and, from what he had said, was justified in believing that his daughter could sing, and well. The piece I selected was a favourite with them, and the Vicar sang the first part, a solo, in good style. When his daughter commenced, however, I felt as one silenced into awe by some seraphic sound, and, absorbed by its

sweetness, only found that I had been listening when, like a departed zephyr, it was gone. The last notes of the instrumental portion of the piece struck; I was about to thank the Vicar and his daughter, and to apologise to them for omitting to take my part, when Harry, who had attentively listened to the whole of the performance, cried out—

"Bravo—bravo! Melton and I took our parts so well, that there was not the least deviation either in our time or tone."

"Fool—fool!" said I to myself, "why did I forget to take my part?" But this was not enough, of course, so I boldly declared that the style and delicacy of Miss Whitworth's playing and singing had pleased me so much, that, unintentionally, I had omitted to observe the time when my voice should have told, and begged, therefore, that they would pardon my apparent neglect. As the compliment which my apology contained was accepted as I desired, I ventured to request that the piece might be performed again, which was complied with, but not till Harry had brought me to my senses by the force of one or two witticisms, which, with a moderate aid from Bacchus, he was well able to give, and to the entire satisfaction of Apollo, whose spirit he had invoked for my especial assistance. At the conclusion of the performance upon the second occasion, Harry was not the only one who spoke in praise of the manner in which I had taken my part, for, to my great joy, she whose voice had charmed me with the splendid music of Mozart, now told me with delight of the rich fulness of my own, and of the increased beauty and grandeur the proper taking of the bass had given to the piece. Gratified by the praise of so beautiful a being, I was encouraged to prove myself worthy of her love, and did all I could to obtain it. The Vicar, too, highly pleased to find me a "musical amateur of

considerable merit," as he observed, regretted that Harry had not cultivated his voice to a similar state of perfection; hearing which, my friend Harry, of Jupiter notoriety, quietly remarked—

"But, dear father, I would remind you that I am preparing to take an important part in the political affairs of this great nation, and must therefore set aside the developing of any musical talent I may have, however much you may deplore it."

"Your reply interests me, Harry," replied the Vicar; "and I have no doubt that, by perseverance and care, you will become an eminent orator and statesman. Nevertheless, a pretty good knowledge of music would be a noble acquisition to the other proficiencies you are acquiring; and its soothing influences, especially if well directed by your own mind, would scarcely ever fail to relieve a brain which may become racked by the studious obligations consequent upon a fulfilment of parliamentary duties. Oh, what a beautiful solace is music! By all means, Harry, learn to play the piano; and if you should not care to become a brilliant performer on that instrument, fail not to be able to play sufficiently well to amuse yourself when oppressed with the anxieties, buffetings, and responsibilities peculiar to the life of a parliamentary man. I have been—nay, still am—a student myself; and although the reading of some interesting book will sometimes refresh me when wearied with over-much work, I can assure you that half-an-hour's good practice upon the piano has effectually restored me to my usual state of health and happiness. But I would not have you neglect your business duties for any love of music, lest Apollo serve you as did Jupiter."

"Well, really, Vicar," said his wife, "after so fine a speech, I think you had better go to Parliament yourself!"

"Just so, my dear; and then persuade the Sovereign to create me Baron of—"

"Walton," cried Harry, with a laugh; "in which case, I, of course," continued he, "should be the Hon. Henry Whitworth, M.P. for the county of ———, and eligible to fill sundry offices in which I should not consider myself disgraced if called on to study the principles of red-tapeism. Ha, ha!"

"Well done, Harry," said I; "I presume you are looking out for something more than fame, nor do I blame you, for I should be glad of a good post myself, and without such an amount of labour as would preclude the possibility of my being well and happy in it."

"A very snug idea, Mr. Melton," said the Vicar; "but whatever one's taste, desires, or views, it is but seldom that they are sufficiently good to endure, or practical enough to be enjoyed. I would always encourage a laudable ambition, however, to the best of my abilities, and consider that I should be unworthy of the name of a Christian did I not do so. Our talents should not be buried, Sir; and since Harry is blessed with a powerful one for music, I sincerely trust that he will cultivate it; and, if so, the time will probably come when he will say, 'Well, if I had not learned to play and appreciate good music, I should now feel the want of some power to chase away the melancholy or wearisomeness that has, from various causes, come upon me at this hour, which, most certainly, was never intended to be unenjoyed.' There are times, Sir, when neither reading, conversing, walking, nor riding, will raise one from certain unpleasant moods of feeling; all of which I have felt, and all of which I have successfully removed at times, thank God, by my cultivated talent for music. If a man employs his talents aright, he is happy, as far as he can be in this world. There is a language

in music which can ascend to heaven, or it may be merely local in its meaning and effect. But enough; for I am not unwilling that our voices should blend again and again upon this delightful occasion."

Piece after piece was sung and played, during which I had the best of opportunities for observing the true disposition of the sister of my college friend. It was faultless. Her voice was that of love, and her actions wore the impulse of a pure and generous heart. I beheld her thus; and as I gazed upon her fair and intelligent face, I was enraptured with it, and with the soul which beamed therefrom, and at once determined that, next to God, she should be the most beloved object of my life.

CHAPTER II.

How unexpectedly one sometimes finds oneself the recipient of hospitalities from persons who but a short time previously had no place in one's affection or memory. My visit to Walton was ostensibly to have a passing chat with my friend, Mr. Henry Whitworth, and to see the old church of that large village, which I had heard was a superb structure of ancient architecture. I had reason to think that I should be well received by him; nor happily, was I wrong in my judgment, as I have already shown.

I had not yet examined the old church, however; so, after breakfast upon the second morning of my visit, I expressed a wish to that effect, when the Vicar, pleased with the idea, said—

"And I will assist you, Mr. Melton, for there is no part of it that should escape the eye of a person of your good taste."

"I could have no better guide, Sir, and will therefore see it with you as soon as may be convenient."

"Now, then, if you please. Harry, where is the key of the crypt?"

"It is, I believe, in the oak chest in the vestry; but will Mr. Melton have time, do you think, to see the crypt?"

"Certainly—certainly!" cried the Vicar; "that is one of the beauties of Walton church. Have you forgotten the fine ceiling it has, my son?"

"No, my dear father, nor the tales which have been told beneath it."

"I see—I see!" cried the Vicar. "Come along, Mr. Melton, or he will persuade you that we shall see the ghost of Agnes Countess Sutton, as well as her bones."

"So much the better if we do," said I; "but what of the Countess Sutton, may I ask?"

"Ah! that's the question," was Harry's reply, making an attempt to arouse my curiosity.

"Never mind the question, Mr. Melton," said the Vicar; "let us go and see for ourselves."

We were soon within the church, which is a perfect gem of ecclesiastical architecture—mutilated, however, here and there, by ruthless hands, as most ancient places have been. After obtaining the key of the crypt, we took a general survey of the Christian fabric, with which I was immensely pleased. The most comprehensive view, however, is at the west end, from which spot I saw lines of majestic columns—beautifully pointed arches—walls of grand and imposing masonry—elegant carvings—vaulted ceilings, studded with stars and gilded bosses, as if to resemble the glorious canopy of heaven—richly stained glass windows—images representing the angelic hosts—statues of men of genius and worth—and many other beautiful and interesting features of executed design peculiar to a fine old Gothic church, including an exquisitely painted picture of the Redeemer, which is fixed over the communion table.

"Ah!" thought I, as I beheld that monument of the greatness of a past age, "what changes have taken place in this vast world since thy foundations were laid! Alas, what an ordeal England herself has passed through since then! My God—my God! here is a glorious temple erected to Thy

glory and honour, and yet I learn that men, heated by passion and revenge, have steeped their swords in blood within its walls! But what are these lesser monuments—of whom do they speak?" There was no one to answer, for the Vicar had left me to contemplate the scene in my own way, and I stood alone. Scanning the solemn and gorgeous interior with profound reverence and admiration, I moved eastward. Arrived at the centre of the church, I was struck with the immense size of the clustered pillars which support the great tower and spire, in the south-east one of which I discovered a door of narrow width, and which, as the key was in, I tried to push open. I now looked around me rather quickly, and, not seeing or hearing anything of the Vicar, I called out for him, but could only hear the echo of my own words as from vault to vault they travelled along. I stamped loudly with my foot upon the pavement, but the response was a dull and heavy reverberation of the sound I had caused, which seemed to say, in one long, dying cadence, "Gone."—"Come back—come back!" I cried, as if afraid to unlock and pass the door alone. "Come back! come back! come back!" however, was all I could hear; and the lengthened repetition of my own words tended to increase my awakened curiosity, which was ultimately developed into a fearless desire to penetrate into places which I thought might be haunted. I had turned the key, pushed open the door, and was standing within the opening, when a singular feeling of loneliness came over me, and I knew not whether to go forward, or make a hasty retreat from the building altogether—so perplexed had I become with many strange imaginings. "Eternal Spirit!" I cried, "why am I confounded?" when a faint kind of whispering followed my words, which I fancied came from some place below. On

I went, however, and, descending a spiral stone staircase, was soon in darkness. Halting upon a landing which I found formed by the tenth step, and seeing a dimly lighted lamp at some distance, I called out, but no reply came, so I did the best I could to approach the spot from whence the light proceeded; but my object was not effected without considerable fear and danger, owing to facts yet to be disclosed. Faint as was the light from the lamp, I could see that I was in a great vault, in which were many coffins, while here and there dark recesses seemed prepared to receive others. My first survey was necessarily a rapid one, but I saw no evidence of life, so I gazed on the melancholy scene for a while with sad and sickening feelings, and then took the lamp to aid me in making a close inspection of it, which interested me in the highest degree. The ceiling, I soon saw, presented a richly-ribbed groin of Norman date, supported by one row of columns. At the upper end, from whence I took the lamp, a stone altar attracted my attention; there were a crucifix, a tabernacle, and other sacred things upon it, all of which were covered with the dust of centuries. An involuntary sigh escaped me as I left these reliques of a by-gone age, and I could not help exclaiming aloud, "Alas, that these little things of the earth should ever have been cause for bloodshed and murder—for torture and imprisonment! Yet, here they are—and why? Will they moulder away, and be forgotten? or will they, like seed cast into the earth, yet bear fruit? Answer me, ye spirits of the past!" But I cried in vain.

In turning from the altar-step upon which I was standing, bent on searching out other strange and mysterious things, several monuments caught my eye: some were perfect, while others seemed as if they had been pitched into the vault through a

hole in the ceiling. Lying here and there, too, I beheld effigies of cross-legged knights in coats of mail; barons, represented in armour and otherwise; with many other figures, some of which were headless, while others had lost a hand or foot, and in some cases both. Passing these and numerous piles of coffins, the greater number of which I found to be formed of lead, of various shapes and sizes, I came to another door, which was fastened, but I could not see by what means. "I wonder what is beyond," said I, in a low tone of voice. I stood looking at it—the semi-circular arch above, the stone jambs at its sides, one after another, to see if I could trace any secret way of opening this door; but my search was to no purpose, so I turned from it to read the inscriptions on some of the monuments, which were cut in brass, and in ancient characters. The second which I read was enough for me, for it told of "Agnes Countess Sutton," of whom the Vicar had hinted something before I left the vicarage to enter the church. I stood aghast at the discovery, for, although I had never seen a ghost, I thought it not improbable under the circumstances of the position in which I was placed. I knew not what to do for a moment, but on recovering my usual state of moral courage, I laughed at the weakness I had displayed, and determined to find out whether such a thing as a ghost was in the vault or not, and therefore prepared myself for a combat should it prove an offensive one. To pass the door was my next object; I returned to it with a steadied nerve, for my curiosity was desperately excited, and my eyes wide open to witness—a ghost. "Bah!" I now cried aloud; "I believe people are sometimes afraid of their own thoughts, but I am not, so here goes—" and down went the door—smash! crash! dash!—"Halloo! who's there?" I looked through the

now opened door-way, and, to my utmost astonishment, saw the Vicar and Harry running out of the crypt as fast as their legs could carry them, while I, who had so suddenly frightened them, followed closely on their heels, and actually caught hold of Harry's left foot as he was getting through one of the windows.

"Come back—come back!" said I as I pulled; but his shoe coming off, I fell backwards amongst a lot of human skulls and bones, while they, finding that it was I who had spoken, returned, and welcomed me out of the crypt. They looked very pale, and so did I, for I was quite tired with my ghost-hunting expedition, an account of which I detailed to them in a very few words. At my request we entered the vault together, replaced the lamp, the door, and some other matters which I had disturbed, and then returned to the Vicarage; and, despite the solemn thoughts that had reigned in my mind during the earlier portion of the time spent beneath the roof of the old church, I could not help joining Harry in a good and hearty laugh—one of the best and heartiest I ever remember.

"You are a brave fellow," observed the Vicar, "and ought to be made Sir ——"

"William," said I, seeing that he did not know my Christian name.

"Yes," he continued, bowing most politely, "Sir William Melton, C.M.G."

"Capital—capital!" shouted Harry; "C.M.G., that is—*Cured of curiosity by the Merton Ghost!* Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, no!" I exclaimed; "that will not do, for I have not yet seen the ghost!"

"But I thought it had come when you knocked the old door down, for I was never more startled in my life," said the Vicar, not yet recovered from the effects of the chase I had given him out of the crypt.

"Nor was I, for I did not know of the door-way at all," said Harry, looking round him suspiciously.

"You need not be afraid, Harry, there are no ghosts here," said Miss Whitworth, whose looks did not at all betoken that she was quite sure of what she affirmed.

"No, that there are not, my dear," said her mother; who, as Harry had done, now looked round in turn to satisfy herself.

"Be that as it may, my dear children, we must not mention any thing of Mr. Milton's adventure to Lady Sutton, or indeed to any one else, lest the old ghost story should be revived, and—and—"

"You and I be laughed at," cried Harry, as he thought of the haste with which he and the Vicar had left the crypt.

"Of all ghost stories, I think I should like to hear that of the Countess Sutton," said I, looking at the Vicar.

"Well, I think you have a claim to hear something of the person whose ghost you vainly yet so earnestly sought, so I will briefly tell you what I have been told," was the Vicar's reply; while his wife and daughter, who had to prepare for dinner, left the room. The Vicar commenced by saying—

"Many—many years since, lived one Ralph Sutton, a warrior of renown, and of great manly beauty. Knighted upon the field of a celebrated battle, and while comparatively young, he took his place at Court as Sir Ralph. Much admired by the fair ladies who graced the halls of the King's palace by their presence and smiles, he became affected by the softness of their manners and speech, and right earnestly vowed his love to the Lady Agnes Merton, whose personal attractions and disposition were eminently fascinating and good. The King smiled upon the happy pair, and bade them God speed. High in favour with his royal master,

there were those who envied the knight his position, and who likewise sought to disgrace him. Created an earl, after performing successfully some important business on the Continent, he became sensible of the power of his rank, and increased the size and magnificence of his house, which, out of compliment to his lady-love, he named Merton Hall. The King spoke highly of his arrangements, and witnessed the celebration of his marriage with Lady Agnes, which took place in St. Wilfred's Church of Walton. It was a day of rejoicing, and the Earl and his fair Countess were happy. Business of a confidential nature again took him out of England, and his bride remained in her new home to await his return. During his absence, however, a Sir Richard Guest visited Merton Hall, as he said, for the purpose of congratulating the Earl on his recent marriage, and to talk over some of the many changes which had taken place since Lord Sutton was plain Ralph. Sir Robert was admitted to the presence of the Countess, to whom he expressed himself much disappointed at finding her lord absent, especially as he could have joined him in the sport of boar-hunting. Under various pretences he called again and again at the Hall, even to the surprise and annoyance of her Ladyship.

Powerful by means of large estates—sensual and malicious by nature—and once a secret rival for the hand of the Countess—Sir Richard Guest was looked upon by the servants of the Hall as an ominous character, and especially by one Tims, whom he largely bribed to aid him in what at first was only intended to be a scandal upon the house of Sutton, but which ended in a fearful tragedy. The crafty Guest knew how to do the cruel work he had set his mind upon, and spared neither trouble nor expense in carrying it out. An

insinuating and flattering gossiper at Court, he was listened to and believed at one time—feared and hated at another. Without the power to raise himself to distinction in diplomatic or other political pursuits, he was jealous of all above him, and therefore mean and cringing to his Sovereign, whose favour he sought by low and cunning stratagem, rather than by elevating words and deeds. Foiled in his endeavours to hold posts of honour through legitimate means and meritorious qualifications, and to obtain the hand of Lady Agnes in marriage, his mind became darkened by feelings of revenge, the chief victim of which was the Countess Sutton, whose character he attempted to blast by a false charge of adultery with himself. One may check the raging and ravenous element of fire, but who can remove the suspicion which slander creates?

"Having arranged all his infamous plans, secresy was necessary to develope them. The man, Tims, was taken into his confidence; he was base enough to listen to the tempter, and to prefer a little glittering gold, rather than the peace which a good conscience brings.

"A day of retribution followed the events I have briefly hinted to you, Mr. Melton," continued the Vicar; "but as I find that the hour of dinner is near, I will not recite to you what I have written upon 'The Ghost of Merton Hall;' preferring rather that you should have a copy of it, which you can read at your leisure."

The Vicar at once handed to me the promised narrative, which I here produce as forming the subject of the next Chapter.

The Ghost of Merton Hall.

CHAPTER III.

"And so I am ever disappointed of seeing my friend the Lord Sutton!" said Sir Richard Guest, as he put on a look to correspond in meaning with the words he uttered to Lady Sutton, on first seeing her ladyship at Merton Hall.

"Know you not, Sir Richard, that my lord has sailed for France these three days past, and on business for the king, his master?"

"This is the first I've heard on't, my lady," said Sir Richard, who knew the exact time when Lord Sutton sailed, and also when he might be expected in England again; "and I would that I were there too, for then I'd be content, and e'en whet my sword afresh for the pate of the king's enemies."

"A good speech, Sir Richard; but why not live in peace, and by thy presence gladden some fair lady's heart at home?"

"So says the king, who likes not the flashing steel, yet keeps me for the use on't."

"Fie, fie! Sir Richard; the land is full of trusty swords for all emergencies; so rest thine arm, and quit the strife of war. The king is wise. War makes the coffers light, and the heart of the maiden heavy."

"And how fares his Majesty?"

"What! a gallant knight seeking Court news in the country! By our Lady, this looks not well for thy loyalty!"

"How so, fair lady!" cried he, a little abashed at the language applied to him by the Countess.

"Nay—nay, Sir Richard, I may not tell; yet, methinks, a damsel fair is sooner caught at Court than where the huntsman blows his horn—eh?"

"The Court, fair Countess, is my pleasure-ground, and well I like it; still, a wild-boar hunt freshens one for other sports, e'en that of jesting with a fool."

"Anger ill becomes a knight, Sir Richard, so out on thee for thy cross wit, which is but sauciness.

"My fancy, Countess, makes my sayings quaint, and which, in this dull place, might be of use."

"But you are thirsty, Sir Knight!"

"Which makes me cross."

The bell sounded, and Tims, a serving-man, appeared to answer it.

"A goblet of wine!" said the Countess to the serving-man.

"Yes, my Lady," answered Tims, as he eyed Sir Richard.

"This drinks well, Countess, and I quaff to your absent lord."

"Whom our Lady protect."

"And now to thyself, Countess," said the knight, as he passed the goblet a second time to his lips.

"Sir Richard is warming with our cheer."

"And will e'en drink the health of our King—"

"In another goblet, then, Sir Knight!"

"To-morrow week, fair Countess."

"As you will; and may my lord be here to drink it with thee."

Sir Richard resumed his hunting for a short time, and then rejoined the Court. Returning, however,

at the time appointed, he again made his way to Merton Hall, and enquired whether the Earl had returned. Now he well knew that he had not, but it answered his purpose to call. He saw the Countess, drank the King's health with well-affected sincerity, chatted with her ladyship for a while, and then retired. He repeated his visits several times, the last of which took place late in the day, and after hunting. Being some distance from the hostelry at which he was stopping, however, and under pretence of being fatigued and alone, he was invited by the Countess to rest at the Hall for the night. His point was now gained. Bidding her ladyship good night, and—as he said he should return to Court early on the morrow—farewell, he retired early, but not to rest. Tims, the serving-man, accompanied him to the chamber in which he was to sleep, and, having done so, was about to leave the crafty knight to himself, when, with a meaning grin, he turned, and thus addressed the fellow:—

"Your name is Tims, eh? Well, you are a good fellow, and ought to be rewarded.—I'm weary of hunting, and want rest.—You once fought under my banner, fellow, eh? I remember you, eh?"

"I'm not a soldier, Sir Richard, nor never used a sword in the King's service."

"I'm out on't, then, eh?—Dost like gold, fellow, eh? See—see! I've plenty, and can spare a bit on't for the man that suits my purpose.—Canst keep a secret, fellow, eh?"

"Well, for that matter, I've one or two now, Sir Richard, and could well enough make merry over another if 'tis worth my while: What is't?"

"Hast ever been in love, fellow, eh? Hast ever been robbed of thy wench, eh?"

"That's one of my secrets, Sir Richard."

"Ah! by St. Peter, I see thou hast! and I'll

bet a wager thou chastised the fellow with a cudgel till he couldn't keep pace with a crawling worm —eh?"

"Faith, Sir Richard, I'll keep my doings to myself, for a secret's not of much worth when more than one knows it."

"Say you so? I see—I see! you killed him, and he deserved death: and she, the wench—"

"Let me have the gold, Sir Richard—the gold! and neither lord nor priest shall judge I have it, or thy secret either."

"Thou'rt a cunning knave, I see, and likest the looks of my pelf, eh?"—Look to it, then, my man, and see where ye put these odd bits of luck; and mind ye, fellow, if ever ye split the secret I'll give to thy keeping, look well to thy hard pate!"

"As St. Peter's thy saint, by St. Peter I'll swear to my text, and to the true keeping of it!"

"That sounds well; and now, mark ye, call me at the hour of four, and be with me till five, when I will double thy luck, and tell thee what to do."

"I will see to it, Sir Richard, and now leave thee to the care of St. Peter, while I bestir myself to adjust my nightcap."

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"That Sir Richard is a comical fellow, and grins like a devil," thought Tims, when the first interview with the knight was over; "but I wonder what the secret is. Odsbodikins! where did I put the gold? Ah! 'tis here, and now let's look at it. Five gold pieces! Five gold pieces! and, by my soul, I'll have an eye on 'em. Five gold pieces! five gold—gold—pieces, and all mine. Ha, ha! I'll grin too: and now for the night-cap. But what's the secret? Ha, ha, ha! I can keep it, or my name's not Tims. Ha, ha! Ten gold pieces by five of the clock. Ha, ha! I'll be up—yes, till this

time to-morrow night; and then—then—" the secret was told.

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"My lord, my love, thou art not yet back to my panting heart, and I like not the manner of that Sir Richard," mused Lady Sutton. "'Tis strange he hunts the boar when courtiers most do hunt the King, and, like beggars, run or walk as suits their purpose best. Hasten home, my love, and let's to the Court, for there Sir Richard can—if aught to give in kindly words to my good lord—speak out. But the man is strangely talkative, and fuller of jesting than my lord would brook—and so take care, Sir Richard, or perchance a rod will make thee mannerly.—Fool! he talks of love, and hate, and seems confounded too. I vow he's ugly in heart, that Guest, and I can't forget his visage. I would that my love tarry not long at the foreign Court, nor leave me yet again without the power to tell a sneaking toad in knight's array that I no entertainment give to men of this intruder's sort.—But, ah! my love's not here! and although the memory of his soft caresses is sweeter than honey to my lips, and that of his voice like rich music to mine ear, I yet feel a sadness of soul upon me which I do not understand. Ah! my love, my husband! I would that I thy presence now could see, and hear thee speak; for then I'd know that thou wert safe from harm, and then, too—how happy, happy I should be! My child, too, my unborn child—my Sutton's child and mine, will soon be here, and who would welcome it like he, its noble, loving father? Return—come home, my love! I'm sad without thee. God of the night!—God of the day!—my God and his, I pray Thee keep from harm my love, and send him soon to me and to my—my—"

"Child" was the word she would have uttered; but her feelings overcame her, and tears, such as true-hearted woman only can shed, thus early bedewed the fair cheeks of the young and beautiful Countess of Merton Hall.

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Retired within a chamber in which a magnificent couch, whereon a prince might fitly have received refreshing repose, and wherein, amidst other things, stood a little ivory crucifix, sat Sir Richard Guest. It was midnight; and the moon and stars were hidden from view by thick clouds, beneath which a solemn darkness reigned supreme. Howling winds, and the barking of a great mastiff in the court-yard of Merton Hall, vied with each other in making the night one in which the shelterless and weary traveller more than ever sighed in vain for the comforts which two of the inmates of that splendid home but scarcely noticed; for their minds were too intently employed upon subjects of so novel and fiendish a nature, that neither thought of nor desired sleep. With his lamp burning, and with his eyes intently fixed upon the dying embers which lay in the fireplace of the sleeping-room, Sir Robert, with malicious and sarcastic grin, muttered—

"And so, I'm in a fine chamber of my lord's—but not to sleep, I trow; for I've a little else to do. Ha, ha, ha!—Ugh! the Countess is fair as ever, and suits my eye amazingly. Pity I couldn't manage the vixen's heart, for 'tis all love, and that's what I like. Well, I'm here! and—and—I'll do it! Yes, I'll do it! By my sword I'll do it! Ha, ha, ha! Tims—yes, Tims—he's the man. Good! And there's the crucifix! By my soul I'm a bit afeard; and the King, what will he say? and the—the—Earl, what will he say? Bah! 'Tis to be done, and must be done. Yes, I'll do it, for

they've done enough for me; and—and—what do I care for the vixen now, eh? I wish 'twas four —four by the clock, and then I'd know the fellow —Tims, ah, yes, Tims—What's that? Ah! the bell, and 'tis but—but—two! three! four! yes, by St. Peter, it is four! And now for Tims, the man that likes gold. Ha, ha! Silence, listen! I hear him coming; yes, that's his step."

The man knocked gently at the door, and softly cried—

"It is now four by the clock, Sir Richard!"

"Come in, fellow, and give a hand to what's necessary!"

"I'm here, Sir Richard."

"And hast thy gold not far off, too, I'll warrant!"

"That's a secret, Sir Knight, and I'm proud on't!"

"Hush, fool! thy prating unmans me: Dost always talk loud?"

"I can alter my voice, Sir Richard, and—"

"Make it suit thy purpose—eh?"

"Yea, Sir Knight, and thine, for that matter."

"Time presses, fellow, let's out on't, for I'm ready—lead the way."

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"Tis well; and the darkness favours us."

"That's true, Sir Richard; and now I'll take a pace or two to quiet that howling brute in the court-yard, for—"

"Curse thee, fellow! dost want to wait till sunrise for an order, or dost feel afraid of aught!"

"I fear neither priest nor devil, saint nor purgatory," said Tims, for it was he now spoke.

"Let's over the bridge, then, and—"

"The secret know, for I'd have more gold," cried Tims.

"A plenty, yet, of that rare stuff you'll have; so now to my horse, and lead me out to the lower gate."

"And then—"

"To the common, where none can hear, nor see, nor speak, but ourselves."

"That's it, and I'm agreed, Sir Richard."

To the common they went; and there, under a dark and heavy cloud that was spread over them, and which obscured almost all light, Sir Richard Guest, charged with the burning passion of jealousy, hatred, and revenge, made known to Tims the secret object of their meeting in that lone spot, and the way in which it was to be carried out.

To blast the character—to destroy the beauty of womanhood—to snap the golden links of domestic felicity—and to prostrate all the bright hopes and noble feelings of the Earl and Countess—were parts of the infernal scheme that had entered the mind of the depraved, plotting, and abominable Guest, and to effect these he was determined, regardless of the consequences, either to himself or to others. What cared he for the yearnings of her young heart? or for the happiness and prosperity of the man who, by sterling integrity and high attainments, had secured the confidence and respect of his King, and most of the people? What cared he for the peace of his own soul, either in time or eternity? Alas! nothing; for he neither feared the judgment of heaven, nor the punishment of hell.

Away from all but the searching eye of Him whom nothing can escape, the wicked knight dismounted; and in order to be completely at liberty to describe his plans to the traitorous Tims, secured the reins of his horse to his sword, which he drove into the ground to answer the purpose

of a stake, there being no tree nor bush near. This done, he required of the man an oath, but as it was worded in language too blasphemous to be recapitulated here, I pass on to what followed.

"But I must have the gold, Sir Richard, if I'm to do anything I would'nt do without it, so—"

"Fool! have I not promised to pay thee as thy work goes on?"

"I've sworn, Sir Richard, and—"

"So have I."

"For the secret, then, I'm ready!"

"I was once a companion in arms with thy master. I fought for the King with him. He was rewarded, but I was not. I was a gallant knight when he was plain Ralph Sutton. He was ultimately made an Earl, and the King makes him his chief confidant. The Court smiles on him, while it—it—laughs at me. I sought the hand of Agnes Merton, and but for your master—hang him—should have won the vixen's heart. I wanted that woman, fellow, yes, I wanted her, but she spurned me, and married the fellow that holds the very places that I ought to have had. Well, other ladies—women, curse 'em all—do the same as she did, and—yes, they scout me, fellow—scout me—dost see? But, mark me, Tims, I'll be revenged!"

"That's what I would, Sir Knight; and, by our Lady, I'll but help thee to 't."

"You'll swear to that?"

"By all the saints, and my own soul!"

"And, let me tell ye that, if thou turn traitor to my cause, I'll cleft thy skull in twain, and give thy carcase to the dogs!"

"Sorry an inch of a traitor am I, Sir Richard!" shouted Tims.

"Look to thyself, then, and take care of the gold you'll get—eh?"

"That's what I will; so trust me with a roll of secrets, and lots of gold to keep 'em company!"

"But I'll not trust thee too much, fellow, I'll promise ye, lest thou should'st become an idle knave, and get above thy business!"

"That may be, Sir Richard; yet, by my soul, I'll stir me not a bit without the price of a passage and a ten years' keep, so out on thee for a trifler!"

"What! by my word, thy prate is full quick enough yet; so hold, fellow, and I'll double thy luck before sunrise!"

"That's well; and now I'm to thy bidding."

"Hist, then, and I'll tell thee what to do!"

"And how to do it."

"Hold thee, fool! for I'm waiting!"

"And so am I."

"Here, then, look ye, is a letter, in an unknown hand, and it hath upon it the superscription of the Earl, to whom it must be conveyed."

"By our Lady, a job of this kind might cost me my head, so, I pr'ythee look well to the right way of keeping the axe off."

"No fear of thy head, fellow, unless thou play me false, so listen; this letter is for the Earl, and he must have it. To-day, full likely, he will be here, so thou wilt have good opportunity of letting it be seen by him. Take no heed of threats he may put to thee, should it happen thus, for thou must speak falsely; and swear to what thou sayest, if needs be."

"I can do that," said Tims.

"Yes, and I must know the effect of this letter upon the Earl and Countess, and from thee, should I not hear somewhat of it by some other means, which is not to be doubted, for I'll be where gossip is cheap, and may be had for the listening."

"But I pr'ythee, Sir Richard, take care of my head in this matter, for the Earl is no man to

spare the neck of one of my sort, if he knew me; so let's know what's in the letter, and then I'll judge for myself a bit of the risk I run; and if 'twould be a case for the block, or the stocks, if I got found out!"

"Rascal! I'd hang thee for a knowing imp, but—well, likely enough, after all, 'tis best that thou should'st know, and 'tis—'tis—'tis but a little slander, fellow, and that's all on't!"

"Ugh! I see where I am now, and I'll warrant myself up to a job like this; but, in good truth, I'll have to skip these grounds like a wild deer for it, or, by our Lady, myself and my luck won't keep long company!"

"And I trow ye'll be well breech'd for the journey, if it should so be, and here's the value on't—See! ten pieces more gold!"

"Good, Sir Richard, I have it, and love the sound on't well."

"And now for the letter; take it—there, ye have it, mind it, take care of it and thy gold; the gold and the letter—dost heed?"

"Aye, aye! Sir Richard, and beshrew me if I entice a thief by showing him gold. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the letter, fool; how will ye treat that?"

"The letter, Sir Richard! the letter—"

"Curse thee, fool! the gold is making thee mad! I'll be hanged if ye wont lose that and thy head too, at this rate!"

"'Tis here, Sir Richard, 'tis here; see—I've got the letter in one pocket, and the gold in another."

"So far, good; but, by our Lady, that letter will hang thee if by any chance ye fail to deliver it into the hand of thy master, so look to't."

"All right, Sir Richard, and what am I to say?"

"Why, ye must say that a mounted courier brought it to the Hall, and—"

"That's what I'll do, Sir Richard, for ye 're a mounted courier—"

"Hold thy prating twing-twang, fellow, and don't interrupt me again just—"

"Beshrew me if I will, Sir Richard, only that's true what I said; that's what I was going to say, and—"

"I told thee to shut thy goblet, fellow, so now listen—and when ye have given the letter to the Earl, just go about thy business as if ye knew nothing about it."

"That's what I'll do, Sir Richard, and then I'll say—"

"Nothing, but leave all the rest to me. Thy master will soon be here, so see that ye lose no time in delivering to him the sealed packet, or letter, as soon as he is prepared to—no, not thus, but give it to him on the morning after his arrival, and say that a mounted courier brought it thee overnight."

"So I will, Sir Richard, come when his lordship may."

"And fail not in thine errand, or my sword shall make dog's meat of thee; but if thou doest thy work well, I'll pay thee well, so now look to't. A trusty courier will be at the old hostelry of Walton in a few days, and thou wilt know him as a pedler. He will make a sign to thee, and thou must do the same to him; after which, ye'll arrange to meet the fellow, and then ye can tell him how speeds the letter, and how it will have acted."

"And what's the sign, Sir Richard?"

"Well, ye'll see the fellow about the hostelry, where he will be on the listen for gossip, any hour past four, so look out for him; and when ye see such a man, and that ye may be sure he is my man, just watch till ye see him stroke his sandy

beard three several times with his left hand, when ye must do the same with thine; and if he again strokes his said beard another three times, ye may know that Master Pedler will follow ye to any place for the news that ye'll have for him."

"Master Pedler—old hostelry of Walton—stroke beard three times—follow me for news—all right; and now—"

"Ye may lead me to the high-road for Walton, and see that ye take care of the letter—the letter—mind that, fellow, and the gold—dost mind?"

"That's what I do, Sir Richard, so fear me not!"

The man Tims returned to the Hall, while Sir Richard made the best of his way to Walton, and afterwards to London, which latter place he reached soon after the Earl Sutton, who, having returned from France in the meantime, was coming home to Merton Hall to see his lovely Countess.

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The old hostelry, or Red Lion Inn, of Walton, was a famous place for gossip and good ale. One Master Curtis was the landlord when Sir Richard Guest called for breakfast at the early hour of six in the morning, and 'ere it was yet light.

"How now, good Sir Richard! and why here 'ere the sun has risen to tell my eyes that a gallant knight waits the hospitalities of the Red Lion of Walton?" cried Master Curtis, as he popped his head out of a little window just above the sign-board that was swinging to and fro with the force of divers gusts of wind which swept by the old hostelry.

"'Tis dark enough, I'll warrant me, landlord, and not over cheerful to boot, for which reasons I'd have thee not delay opening thy door; so down with thee, and look well to the horse, which must carry me to London to-day," said

Sir Richard, for it was he who had knocked up Master Curtis on the morning in question.

"And a rare hunt ye've had, I'll warrant, Sir Richard," said the landlord, as he bestirred himself on behalf of the knight.

"Well, enough of that, my friend; and now for a fire and the gridiron, for I'm in good mood to do justice to thy meat. What hast got, good fellow?"

"Hot or cold, Sir Knight?"

"Hot—hot—hot, yes, hot, all hot; and quick!"

"And hot it shall be, Sir Richard; and quick too, as if for our royal master, the King!"

"Whom I shall see to-day, for I'm tired of the chase, and would again look upon the fair women who make the Court so charming."

"By my soul, that's a truth I'll not deny, and beshrew me if I would'nt like as pretty a job."

"Thou hast had thy day, mine host, so heed well what's on the gridiron, and leave—curse thee, for a fool, thou hast toss'd the steak into the fire, and all about the hateful women!"

"By our Lady, I'm not the man to say that much of the dear souls, so cook the steak thyself, Sir Knight!"

"That's cool, mine host, and I wot ye'll be glad enough yet to serve a worse customer, so now look to't!"

"Not while my Lord of the Hall lives, Sir Richard, so how now?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"He! he! he!"

"Good; mine host is fitter far to jest than cook; so here's to the health of Master Curtis, and success to his buffoonery!"

"A truce to all anger, Sir Knight, for I trow it'll not pay the early rising of either, so out on myself for tilting this gridiron."

"Good, mine host! civility's a cheap commodity, and preserves the peace."

"That's better, Sir Richard; and, look ye, the devil couldn't cook a steak better than that's cooked, so now I'll sop the ale."

"And, mine host, with thine own hands, give a sup to my steed, and here's the price on't."

"That's the best gold piece I've seen for many a day; fresh from the Mint, too, I'll warrant, for it shews the head of the King to be like his heart—and that's perfect."

Sir Richard finished his meal in a very hasty manner, upon hearing Master Curtis's confession of loyalty, and then departed on his journey.

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"I don't like this letter job, and that's it," thought Tims, as he looked at the sealed packet by daylight; "but I'll do it, and then I'll have more gold."

How much depended upon that resolve—I'll do it! and if for a moment the man saw danger or wrong in what he was bribed to do, the thought of gold—more gold—kept him to his promise with the base and cowardly knight, and the fatal letter was delivered!

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"Now our Lady be praised, for I hear the tramp of horses on the road, and shall soon see my lord and husband!" cried Lady Sutton, as she left her chair to be in readiness to greet the Earl; for it was he, with his attendants, who were nearing the Hall, and the clattering of whose horses' hoofs on the road had caught her ear.

Although fatigued with travelling and much business, Lord Sutton met his wife with a joyous smile, and embraced her most affectionately.—

When informed, however, that Sir Richard Guest had called several times to see him, and of the hospitalities he had received, Lord Sutton, certainly affected by the information, yet without any definite reason, asked the object of his visits, which was given to him, of course, but only so far as it had been disclosed to her ladyship. For various reasons, the subject was not again resumed just then, but it was not forgotten by either.

Happy in the love and confidence of each other, Lord Sutton and his Countess welcomed the dawn of the day which followed that on which he returned home with feelings peculiar only to those who, being pure and noble in thought, participate in earthly enjoyments without fear.

Of great and almost indispensable service to his King and country, his stay at the Hall could not well be a long one, and especially just then; so that, much as he might have desired a temporary relief from the duties of his high and important offices, and longer to have enjoyed the society of his lovely bride in the isolated but splendid home he had named after her, he was already premeditating on a speedy return to the official residence from which he had departed only the day before.

How transient and uncertain are the joys of this world! Alas, how perplexing and cruel are some of its ways! Paradise—Eden—Love! My God, how often is it the birth-place of iniquities too dark, too fiendish, too hellish to be recorded! One cannot but shudder at the thought that one's neighbour—nay, the very man who wishes to be called friend, may become, if he is not already, the great and wicked enemy who would turn one's joy into sorrow—youth and beauty into feebleness and ugliness—and even rob him of his very blood, his life, his all!—"In the midst of life we are in death."

"How fair the morning—how fair the scene!

How beautiful, how grand, how sublime, how gorgeous, my love, are the forms and colours which bedeck the hill and dale and sky of this fair scene! And you, my love, on whom my gladdened eyes would ever dwell, and whose voice but speaks a heart all mine, how precious thou art to me!"

"Welcome, indeed, art thou, my noble lord, my husband, and my love; dear are thy sweet words to my ear, and I will cherish them in my memory for ever, where they will blossom as sweetly-scented roses, spangled with the freshest dew of heaven. For thee, my noble one, on whose countenance sits the light of love and valour, is my life, my love, my all; and I would that thy presence oftener dwelt within our Hall of Merton, for I seem to fear me, when alone, lest aught should happen to thee, and I—"

"Nay, my Countess dear, I wot not of danger for myself, nor do I fear that harm can come to thee while in our Hall of Merton, which is fuller of bolts and trusty guards than common robbers dare approach; and so, my lovely bride, why fear such fancies, when all thou art and hast is safe within the care of one who honours well his King, and fears not man?"

"Noble Earl! how beautiful thy words come forth; and how true, besides, they are, and full of courage, such as wise men only speak! 'Tis well, then, my love, and my heart shall not fail me, though 'twere to shield thee from the assassin's knife, from which 'twould rather bleed, than that thine—though full of love to me, yet generous is to all—should ever swell in vain for love, or throb by means of sorrow."

"Yet why, fair Countess, talk thus? I know of nothing which can check our love or peace; but, as well it seems, we might rejoice at thy good state, and hope 'twill be a son."

"May it be as my lord wishes—and soon."

"And now let us to lunch, my fair one, for the air is yet too cool to linger long without, and may besides prove dangerous."

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There sat the married lovers, and they were blest: nor sound nor thought discordant now troubled either. They ate their meal in peace, and savoured it with words which the tongue alone could tell, and which the pen would fail to express: words they were of the heart, and uttered in so endearing a manner, that the repast bore semblance to the very feast of love. But, alas, they knew not that a traitorous enemy was nigh, nor that the reality of their love would so soon pass from them as a dream. Nor did they know that their serving-man bore about him and around them a letter, which would be the means of blasting their earthly happiness, and causing fearful consequences.

While seated near to the fire in the room in which they had so recently lunched, Tims, the serving-man already referred to, entered the apartment with a silver salver, upon which were various despatches and other papers for his lordship, and amongst them the fatal letter was placed. In due time these papers were examined, but not until the Earl had embraced his wife, and retired to the library. One after another received his attention, and then came that which Sir Richard Guest had caused to be delivered to, and read by, the noble Earl Sutton. The words were few, but to the purpose, so that their effect was instantaneous. The brow of the Earl was quickly lowered, his eyes were fixed on the letter, and for a few moments he was motionless and speechless. All transactions in which he had taken a conspicuous part rushed before his mind in a most vivid manner, and then

he stood up as one who was about to be sacrificed at the stake; a burning perspiration teemed from his very flesh, and he sank overwhelmed with sufferings far too excruciating and fearful for the pen of mortal to describe. While thus utterly prostrated, feelings of revenge were suddenly aroused within him. He again stood up; but so utterly changed was he in mind and expression of face, he could scarcely have known himself. He now picked up the letter, locked it in a drawer, and took a rapid walk over a sequestered portion of the park grounds, returning home another way. Again in the library, he resolved to speak and act as if the information which the letter contained had not been known to him; but in this respect he failed, for all who afterwards saw him felt that something was troubling the Lord of Merton, although none in the Hall knew the cause, except the man Tims, who was keeping a strict watch upon his lordship's actions and words.

Afternoon came, and with it the moment when Lord Sutton was again to look upon his wife. They met. Her ladyship saw at a glance that her husband was a changed man; but, from some strange cause, attributed it to information he might have received from the King, upon which she had not the courage to question him. Becoming more cheerful by means of her presence and the conversation he had with her, he yet suddenly bade her adieu 'till they should retire to rest; and then, under pretence of much official business, adjourned to the library.

Now such was the confidence Lord Sutton had in his wife, that, after but little thought, he acquitted her in his mind of the foul stain which the writer of the note had imputed to her; and immediately afterwards summoned the man Tims to his presence. Lord Sutton said—

"Tims!"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Who brought this letter—do you remember?"

"Yes, my Lord, a mounted courier."

"When did he bring it?"

"Last night, my Lord."

"Do you remember ever having seen the man, or the horse upon which he rode, before?"

"No, my Lord."

"That will do, you can leave."

The peculiar manner in which the serving man answered the questions put to him by Lord Sutton, satisfied his lordship that the fellow had spoken falsely, although Tims did not think so.

Lord Sutton again read the letter; and being determined to trace its origin, and to punish its author, matured in his mind such plans as he thought most likely to advance his intentions regarding it.

The man Tims, in the meanwhile, ventured to thank St. Peter and Sir Richard for the success of his share in the transaction, and was next day at the Red Lion Inn, Walton, to meet Master Pedler, to whom, as before arranged, he was to report the effect of the letter upon the Earl and Countess.

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On reaching London, Sir Richard Guest found that Lord Sutton had arrived, and that he was already on his way to Merton Hall. He was thus far pleased, and immediately despatched Master Pedler off to Walton, for the news; at which place he duly arrived, and with such instructions as were necessary to work with those he had given to Tims. This Master Pedler, too, had been also bribed; and, indeed, from various causes, was wholly at the mercy of his master, Sir Richard Guest.

Master Pedler and Tims met, stroked their beards, and recognised each other as the tools of the wicked knight. The time soon came when they discussed the matter of the letter, and Master Pedler was quickly offering his wares for sale to the servants of Merton Hall, where he learned from time to time such particulars as Tims might have for him. But, contrary to expectation, Tims had not the means of giving the Pedler much information, although he was in the neighbourhood for three days; at the expiration of which time he returned from whence he came.

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Lord Sutton was now with the King, who, to his lordship's great surprise, ventured to state that information of his wife's unfaithfulness had reached his ears, and at the same time offered to procure him a divorce from her, and to banish her from his Court for ever. Now the King was much grieved as he spoke, seeing which, Lord Sutton wept, but assured his Majesty that the report was mere slander, and that he was determined to discover and punish the guilty miscreant, at any risk —be he who he may. The King said he should have his favour in the matter, and many were the hearts which trembled when the fiat was made known. With this knowledge, Sir Richard Guest felt he had acted worse than a fool; and that, sooner or later, he would suffer the penalty of his iniquitous folly. Plotting and scheming were now alike useless; for his letter to the Earl had resulted far differently from what he had anticipated, and that through his own incautiousness. The King and most of his courtiers were enraged at the language used in the vile letter, and every endeavour was made to trace its guilty author.— And all this time the virtuous and beautiful lady

was ignorant of the foul charge which was so falsely and cruelly imputed to her; nor would it have been known at Court, had not the accuser, anticipating an investigation through the Earl, himself caused the scandal to be spread there.

Again the Earl repaired to Merton, but not until a private meeting had taken place between the King, himself, and two judges of the law, before whom Sir Richard was cited, and closely interrogated. He was put upon his oath; and not only did he perjure himself by falsely accusing an absent and innocent person of first putting forth the report, but had the meanness to insinuate that his acquaintance with Lady Sutton had been of the most agreeable nature. The interview over, Sir Richard found himself in a dangerous position, and liable to disgrace, with severe punishment; and while arguing the facts of the case for himself, he resolved to follow Lord Sutton to Merton Hall, whither he had gone to make mention of the whole matter to his Countess, and further to question the man Tims. Her ladyship heard the slanderous information with the most poignant surprise and sorrow; she prayed her noble lord to stab her to the heart, if he had the least doubt of her honour. But Lord Sutton had seen through the whole affair, as also had the King and the Judges; whose opinions, with his own, were fully detailed to her ladyship. After having fully and patiently heard the recapitulation, she gave expression to her feelings and sentiments in language far too pathetic even for her lover's ears; he caught her in his arms at the onset, and, overcome with emotion, hid his tearful face upon her bosom. It would be vain further to attempt to describe the feelings of the Earl and Countess Sutton upon this occasion—it would indeed be impossible; yet, as may be imagined, the

true nature of each was revealed in its unmitigated strength and purity, and found vent in words which penetrated their inmost souls.

The further questioning of Tims was now resumed by Lord Sutton, in the presence of two priests, and other persons of authority. At first the man stoutly denied all knowledge of the letter; but when one of the priests suggested to his lordship the advisability of examining his box, clothes, and such rooms or places as he mostly used, he turned pale, as one stricken with death, and immediately begged for mercy. He was listened to with attention, and offered to make a full confession to one of the priests—a proposition to which Lord Sutton firmly and strongly objected; but he bade the man speak the truth boldly and openly, that his words might be especially recorded as evidence against his more guilty accomplice and employer, whom strong suspicion had already singled out as Sir Richard Guest.

A number of guards now entered the room in which the authorities sat, some of whom remained to watch the prisoner, while the rest, under proper direction, proceeded to search for further evidences of guilt which might exist in the places already named; but, as their efforts were in vain, they returned. During their absence, however, a full disclosure of Sir Richard's plot was made by Tims, and of the part he had taken in it. He also produced the gold pieces he had received, placed them upon a table by which he was standing, and sought forgiveness with much earnestness. The guards were now ordered to take charge of the prisoner, and to confine him in irons until arrangements could be made to convey him to London, where he was to appear as chief witness against Sir Richard, for whose apprehension a warrant was at once issued.

On the evening of that day, there was much heartfelt rejoicing at Merton Hall; and never did the Countess look more beautiful, or feel happier. The Earl was cheerful at times, but he could not long remain so, as he was much troubled by the recollection of the gross insult which had been offered to the Countess and himself, which he determined to resent in the severest manner.

Night had once more shed its sombre hue over the Hall of Merton, and the whole of the inmates were astir betimes the next morning. At the hour of ten, six of the Earl's body-guard were directed to march Tims to Walton, from whence he was to be conveyed to London. But before starting, he expressed a great wish to see the Earl and Countess, that he might ask of them their forgiveness, even though he might afterwards lose his head for the offence he had committed. The interview was granted, and the sweet Countess besought her lord in his behalf, but without obtaining any definite promise of mercy for him.

Arrived at Walton, the guards halted with their prisoner at the Red Lion, when Master Curtis privately informed them that Sir Richard Guest had passed the inn the night before, and was unattended. As may be imagined, the intelligence caused no small degree of suspicion in their minds; and after divers opinions had been expressed by one and another of them, it was resolved that Master Curtis should repair to Merton Hall, and inform Lord Sutton of the circumstance. The information was received with much surprise by his lordship, who, without delay, buckled on his armour, examined the edge of his sword, and swore vengeance upon Sir Richard, should he fall in his way. Lady Sutton grew alarmed at the tidings, and desired the Earl not to expose himself to danger, as the law would not only protect them,

but likewise punish the knight for his base and cowardly deeds. But, heedless of all remonstrance, the Earl was firm in his purpose, for he well knew Sir Richard's malicious nature, and foreboded that his appearance in the neighbourhood, under existing circumstances, was fraught with mischief. With these feelings, the Earl bethought himself of the necessity of chastising his sneaking enemy, and forthwith prepared for a deadly combat, should he fall in with him. He embraced his wife, bade her be of good cheer, and then went forth with a few men to see what danger was nigh. They first went to Walton, then to other villages near, but not hearing anything further of the prowling Guest, they returned to the Hall. The Earl was now restless in spirit, and speedily nerved himself for a single-handed combat, if suddenly attacked; for as no tidings of the course Sir Richard had taken could be discovered, it was thought not improbable that he might have concealed himself in some spot at no great distance from them.

Night was fast approaching, and the distant horizon plainly told that the sun would soon set, while all above and around seemed serenely fair; nor was there any sound heard to break the silence that was wont to dwell about the home of the Earl and Countess Sutton. Men of toil had returned to their cottages—the deer had nestled under the leafy branches of great elms—and all were soon to welcome the hours which bring repose, save those of Merton Hall, and the bloodthirsty villain who lurked without.

Lord Sutton had sipped a goblet of wine with the Countess, and they were now pacing together the terraced walk in front of the Hall. He was yet in armour, and his practised eye frequently traversed such recesses or places from which an enemy might suddenly spring. The Countess was filled with fear,

but would not leave her husband's side, although told often of the danger she might meet, should a clashing of swords once take place. But all persuasion was in vain, and her ladyship remained even to the end of the revolting scene which followed. After the lapse of about an hour the coolness of the night air had somewhat calmed the blood of the noble Earl: it was while premeditating a return to the warm fire-side, that the voice of a stranger was unwelcomely thrust upon his ear, and for a moment he was afraid. Quickly turning round, he found himself face to face with Sir Richard Guest; who, with drawn sword in hand, rushed at him, but was at once repelled by a well-aimed cut upon his left arm. The knight felt that he had his match in Lord Sutton, but resolutely determined to maintain his ground with him at every risk. Both were now filled with terrible rage, and fought with all the fury of men intent upon each other's destruction. Meanwhile the Countess hastened into the Hall for guards; who, on coming to the scene of action, were ordered by their master to stand aloof. They obeyed his command, but reluctantly, or the base knight would have been slashed into a thousand pieces on the instant. The moon, by this time, was brightly shining; and as its pale light fell upon the fearful scene, so also did it reveal the still paler face of the trembling Countess; who, in most heart-rending words, entreated the Earl to discontinue fighting, and to hand the murderous knight over to his guards, that he might be punished elsewhere. But no, he would not, for his life had been bargained for—his wife basely slandered—and the honour of his house insulted. More furious than ever the combatants grew, nor was it yet certain who would strike the fatal blow. Curse after curse was uttered by the wicked knight, while the Earl hurled at him the

slanderous words of his letter, backed with still more telling cuts from the glittering steel. From first to last the Countess realised the horror of the bloody strife, and would have died rather than it should have happened. On the combatants went, until the Countess could no longer bear witness to such a spectacle; with one wild rush and shriek she threw herself between them, and received a thrust which was meant to kill her husband. She fell—that beautiful Countess and beloved wife—and her bloodstained form was lifeless. The Earl now redoubled his energies, and while calling upon his God to annihilate the monster whose sword had passed through the body of his wife, he closed upon him, dashed him with killing force to the ground as a wretch too vile to behold, and then ordered his men to complete the work of destruction by severing his head from his body.

Where now was the once happy Countess—the wife from whom one of the noblest and best of husbands had hoped so much? Alas! she was no longer his; and he who had so recently looked on her with delight, and who had heard the sweet whisperings of her voice with such unfeigned pleasure, was now mourning in bereaved and awful sadness o'er her stiffening form.

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Again all was still without: again there was life and bustle at the Hall. Men and women were running about in all directions, not the least busy of whom appeared the skilful accoucheur, and the nurse who was chosen to give suck to the new-born but motherless heir of Merton. The remains of Agnes Countess Sutton were early deposited in the Sutton vault of Walton church, where, strange to say, the superstitious believe her spirit or ghost may sometimes now be seen.

An altar was erected at the eastern end of the vault, and for many years a priest daily said prayers there for the repose of the soul of the unfortunate Countess. A lamp was ordered to be kept burning in that solemn chamber for ever; and since it was first lit, many of the descendants of him who was brought into this world from a slain mother have been buried by its light.

There is something in slander which is often charged with a venom which none can extract or destroy, and especially so when it is used to poison the mind of the husband against a beautiful and good wife. The words which Sir Richard Guest wrote in the fatal letter to Earl Sutton, were indeed but very few, yet how awfully did they result in consequences! Had the wretched and mischievous knight, even on discovery, repented of his wicked deed, and sought pardon from those he had so maligned, all might yet have been well. But, alas, he did not; and through his hardness of heart and cruelty of purpose, he fell while in his manhood's prime, and his mangled body was cast into a deep ditch to perish in loathsome unsanctity.

And what became of Tims? He died in despair by his own hand, and was buried, as a traitor and self-murderer, by the road-side, a stake being driven through his body to mark his unhallowed grave.

CHAPTER IV.

The anniversary of a wedding day should always be regarded with respect, and made evident by some degree of appropriate ceremony. With happy husbands and wives, it may indeed be a day of rejoicing; but with those who are unequally yoked, such cannot be expected. When people make merry, however, the boundaries of prudence should never be overstepped, lest one should remember the occasion with disgust rather than with pleasure. As dependent beings, we have at all times cause for thankfulness; but there are certain days and seasons when we should more especially rejoice with our friends, and when we should share together the comforts and delights of our homes. True hospitality consists not alone in presenting to our friends a feast of delicious meats and fruits, but in a general desire to benefit one another, and in aiming to invigorate the mind as well as the body. Happily, evidences of refined taste and feeling are oftener witnessed now than formerly, and their influences must be morally good in the main; but it is to be feared that these qualifications, although gracefully and pleasingly shown, are sometimes employed as mere artifices to cover an insidious purpose, or else are the vain effusions of flattery. But a social gathering of friends, whether regarded on a large or small scale, is seldom so full of harmony as it may appear to be, more especially when chiefly composed of young or marriageable people; nevertheless, this is no reason why the well-meant

hospitalities of one's friends should be refused, for what would this world be if it were destitute of those good people who, having means, a smiling face, and kind hearts and words, are the great friends of social progress? The hospitalities of a well-disposed, judicious, and intelligent man may generally be accepted as blessings to society; and wherever his presence is to be found, let it be hailed with the profoundest respect, and guarded as an inestimable treasure.

It is in the family circle that we should cultivate love and friendship; and if a man would shine as a true member of society, let him not shun the domestic hearth. Home—that name so dear to the best of England's sons and daughters —should of all places be made enticing, cheerful, and happy; and unless the parents of a family are confiding helpmeets to each other, and just and kind to their children, a barrier of discord will be established or set up, which may crush the brightest hopes of their youth, or send them into the world with memories clouded by scenes and thoughts which will for ever mar their happiness. A good home cannot be too highly prized by the inheritor; for there, under the protection of fond and wise parents, is the bliss of domestic life, and from the cradle to old age. It is in youth that our affections are brought out or developed; and while the heart beats strongest in its emotions of love, may truth and honour be nearest.

Soon after the Vicar had given me the tale of the "Ghost of Merton Hall" to read, I found myself all attention to my toilet, preparatory to going down to the dining room, where I was to meet Lady Sutton, and where, of course, I was to talk about wedding-day anniversaries, and anything else which might be brought forward.

Harry and I entered the room together, and, to

my great surprise, a most brilliant assembly pre sented itself to my wondering gaze; for not only did I behold Lady Sutton, but General Brent and Miss Brent; Doctor Copewell, his wife and Miss Copewell, and others who were there, including—ah! reader, yes, the object of my life; and I—I saw her smile as I entered; but it was, I thought, at—yes—Lord Sutton, who had unexpectedly arrived at Merton Hall that day; and who, by his mother's request, had come up to the Vicarage to assist in the celebration of the anniversary of the Vicar of Walton's wedding-day. I was astonished—perplexed—mad. My sketch of the old church lay upon the table, and I saw one or two other little matters which helped to assure me that I was not dreaming; but so changed was the scene which was now presented, when compared with that of the evening before, that I could scarcely believe myself in the same house.

Introductions had of course taken place, conversation was brisk, and all seemed good humoured and kind; but really and truly, I was almost insensible of my whereabouts, and, for the moment, regretted my own existence. The old church—the celebration of the Vicar's marriage—all were as nothing to me now, and my fond visions were, I fancied, but as so many delusions to mock me. Had I done any wrong that day, that my spirits were so crushed? No, my conscience was clear; yet, alas, how lonely, how sad I felt in that gay assembly; and even in the presence of the woman who had fascinated me—yea, more, had taken captive my heart! And who can wonder that I should have felt thus—for was I not in love? Yes; and I saw the beautiful object of my choice especially regarded and courted by Lord Sutton. "Ah!" thought I, "if this is love, it will kill me, and

the sooner the better; I cannot, do not wish to live." How I answered the various questions put to me by one and another of the party until now, I knew not—nor how I should have passed the remainder of the evening—had not General Brent, in a very off-hand manner, brought me to my senses by first giving me a tap on the shoulder with his walking stick, and then proffering me a pinch of snuff from the silver-headed and opened box at the top of it. How trifling a circumstance will sometimes turn the current of one's thoughts, and lead him either to glory or to shame! Thanks for the pinch of snuff, then, which, from its pungency, failed not to arouse me to a consciousness of my duties as a guest, and stimulate me to be, at least, as entertaining as my fancied rival, Lord Sutton. I now saw clearly that my conduct must have been anything but what it ought, if not positively rude, and I therefore determined, first, to observe the natures of those assembled, and afterwards to advance myself in their estimation as I had opportunity. As yet, I was chatting with the General by the fire-place, and we soon became interested in each other; and as I have ever been willing to hear and profit by the experience of men who have witnessed much of the doings, and who understand the ways of the world, I was well inclined to give him *attention*. But useful and interesting as were his remarks, I could not answer him as I might have done some few days before, for I was desperately in love, and for the first time—tortured, too, beyond measure, because I could not avow it. How strange, how altered, I felt! and the world, once so full of charms, and so beautiful and fair, now seemed to mock me; I was again lost in my own contemplations. Sad, very—very sad I was; dejected indeed! I would have fled from her presence

for ever at one moment; while at the next I felt bound to her as by a thousand chains. Thus absorbed, I might have been considered a dolt, or something worse, had not the General again applied the nob of his stick to me, from which I gratefully took a second pinch of snuff. I thought all was now over; that I would resign in favour of Lord Sutton, and think no more of my first love. But did I act upon this resolve? No; for I had no sooner raised my eye in search of my friend Harry,—who, by the bye, was amusing some of the visitors by recounting to them the tricks of Jupiter,—than I caught that of Miss Whitworth, who, with Lord Sutton, stood listening to, and laughing at, our exploits of the day. But it was enough for me—that look; and my spirits rose from freezing point up to summer heat with a most comfortable velocity, and, I need scarcely say, I was delighted.

The heart is a curious thing to battle with, especially when borne on the wings of love; and the more one attempts to stay its violent flights and beatings, so much the more will it sometimes throb. Thus it was when I stood in the drawing-room of Walton Vicarage, with General Brent, preparatory to entering the dining room for dinner, when, for the first time, I fully realised all the pleasures of hope, and suffered all the torments of fear. Very brief, but fierce, was that ordeal through which I passed; yet, short as it was, it sufficiently proved, in an extraordinary degree, the necessity which existed for my being truthful and decided.

I had already learned to dread the presence of Lord Sutton, and was determined to become a most formidable rival to him for the hand of Miss Whitworth, if I found upon inquiry that it was not already another's. "A woman with a noble heart," thought I, "is worth winning;" and from that

moment I entered, heart and soul, into the campaign of love, and hoisted my colours accordingly.

The company repaired to the dining room rather promiscuously—Miss Whitworth leaning upon the arm of Lord Sutton. "Too late—too late!" I murmured as I saw her then; but as the General was coming close upon me with his big stick—which appeared to be his inseparable companion—I moved aside, that he might take a seat nearest to the fire, while I found myself pulled into one adjoining that in which my friend Harry was seated; at which I was by no means sorry, for he appeared to be in capital spirits, and I was cheered thereby.

To my great joy, Miss Whitworth and Lord Sutton sat apart, and for a time all went on rather pleasantly with me—not, however, on account of the pleasure I derived from partaking of the choice delicacies which the good Vicar had provided for us, but because I fancied that 'ere long I should win to myself the love of his beautiful and accomplished daughter, Mary Whitworth. But not desiring that my secret feelings and intentions should be discovered by any one of the party, I did the best I could to appear interested in all that was going on, and to make myself as agreeable under the circumstances as my nature would allow me.

Dinner over, we retired to the drawing-room for the evening; Lord Sutton as yet being in most strenuous attendance on Miss Whitworth; while I, with ears and eyes wide open to catch every sound and movement, was bent upon studying the various characters before me.

General Brent proffered his services as master of the ceremonies, and one and all of us bowed an acknowledgment: and a fine fellow did the old General prove, too. Full of intelligent wit and

humour, and with a smile or good word for all, he imparted a very acceptable spirit of cheerfulness to all around him, while his goodly form bore witness to the health and peace which reigned within. Keen to perceive the meaning of words addressed to him, and careful of what he said himself, he suffered none of those inconveniences so common to inexperienced prattlers or nervous people; nor was he one to crave for unmerited applause. Bold, yet prudent—confident, but without conceit—courteous, yet not affected—sensitive, yet sympathising only when sympathy was due, General Brent was respected both by rich and poor in his neighbourhood, where, after years of active service in foreign lands, he had come to spend the remainder of his days. His sister, Miss Brent, resided with him.

During the time we were at dinner, I must now observe, certain additions had been made to the fruits, wines, and other rich things that were upon the centre table of the drawing-room when we first entered; one of which, a loving cup, particularly attracted my attention by the elegance of its form and workmanship.

We had not long reassembled, when the General, in a dignified manner, rose and said—

"I hold in my hands a loving-cup, a symbol of domestic peace; and as this is the anniversary of the marriage of our beloved Vicar and his amiable and devoted lady, I bid you all, as you raise this token of love to your lips, wish from your hearts for them, as they do for you and for themselves, health, peace, and the smile of Heaven continually."

The cup was then handed round by the General, who, after each had done due honour to the toast, further observed—

"I believe we are now at liberty to tell tales,

discuss the various topics of the day, sing, play, and"—here the General produced his silver-headed snuff-box-stick, which he now opened by a secret spring—"to take a pinch of snuff, as occasion or circumstances may suggest; and I charge you all, in the name of the Vicar and his lady, to accept for yourselves my motto—'Be merry and wise!'"

"Well spoken, General," replied the Vicar; "and we thank you."

I was thinking of the pretty, yet impressive little ceremony which had just taken place, and of the General's motto, when he again invited me to take another pinch of snuff with him, adding thereto a request that I would hand the box round to all our friends. "What!" I replied, with some surprise, "do the ladies take snuff with you, General, as well as the gentlemen?"

"Try them, sir, try them!" was his reply; and he made me go round to every person in the room with his thumping great snuff-box-stick, one and all looking on to see who took a pinch, how it was taken, and what was its effect; while I, amidst the sneezing and the laughter which took place, found myself better acquainted with the whole assembly, as I had to play ambassador with—"General Brent's compliments, and will you do him the honour of taking a pinch of his snuff?" I was now in good humour with myself, laughed as heartily as any of my newly-formed friends, and even went so far as to think Lord Sutton a very acceptable addition to the party. After sundry bits of small-talk, nut-cracking, sipping of wine, snuff-taking, and so on, we betook ourselves to various other pursuits—some within doors, and some without, for the sky was magnificently fair, and the air beautifully soft. For my own part, I was glad to find myself outside for a short time, and to have an opportunity of breathing the pure

and invigorating air, which I sadly felt the want of, or at least I fancied so.

Whether we view the light of the sun, the moon, the stars, or the colours of the rainbow, how gloriously the Creator shines in them all! Indeed, where is it that His glory does not shine? Is it not seen in the simple daisy, and in the blushing and fragrant rose? Is it not seen in the poor worm—in the beast of the forest—in the sparrow—in the eagle? Yes, great everywhere; but in nothing does it shine so brilliantly as in man—His noblest, greatest work. But I could no longer meditate thus, for here and there flitted before me some one or more of our party; and as Harry now approached the spot where I was standing, I moved towards him, and we entered a conservatory which was attached to the Vicarage, where we found Lord Sutton, the General, Miss Whitworth, and others, full of life and fun, into the spirit of which we endeavoured freely to enter.

Fond of flowers, I could have lingered awhile amidst their freshness, and bloom, and fragrance; but being pressed forward by the General's big stick, I was compelled to move with the rest, who, on coming out upon the well-kept lawn, seemed anxious to return to the drawing-room, in passing the windows of which we heard some one singing and playing; I at once enquired of Harry who it could be, and he informed me that it was Miss Copewell. "Beautiful—beautiful!" said I, as we stayed to listen for a few moments, after which we hastened within.

Returned to the drawing-room, the choice exotics from far-off climes which I had seen in the conservatory were at once forgotten; Miss Copewell was yet singing, and with a beautifully clear and melodious voice. The song was a favourite with the General; and, as he expressed himself sorry at

not having heard it from the commencement, Miss Copewell, at his request, very kindly repeated those verses which she had sung in his absence, the effect of which was fully calculated to give a spirit of emulation to those who followed her. For my own part, I could have listened long to the warbling of so sweet a voice; I was in a reflective mood, from various causes, and I should have been glad could I but have heard it alone. Whatever my mood was, it rapidly changed when the Vicar requested me to take part in the same trio in which I had joined the evening before, with himself and Miss Whitworth. Need I say that I complied with his request? Need I say that I was again enchanted with Miss Whitworth's singing and playing? Need I say that I made the most strenuous efforts to blend my voice with hers? Need I say that I wished Lord Sutton far, far away?—Ah me! how I longed to know my fate! How I suppressed the sighings of a full heart! At the conclusion of the piece, however, I had the pleasure of perceiving that Lord Sutton was not more attentive to Miss Whitworth than he was to either Miss Copewell or Miss Brent; and my fears giving way for the time, I became generally more free in my manners, and conversed with his lordship with much good-feeling.

Various as were the amusements which followed the singing of the trio, none were so truly interesting as the tales with which the General entertained us. And he told them with power, too; but especially so when they related to what he had seen upon the battle-field. Eccentric, to some degree, General Brent certainly was; and he had a singular fondness for waving his big stick about when excited by telling his tales of war; at which, however, none could be offended, for, with its massive silver top, it seemed in his hand rather like a marshal's bâton, than either a walking-stick or

snuff-box, and therefore, under the circumstances, not an inappropriate instrument to aid him in giving character to his expressions.

After the Vicar had favoured us with one or two short tales, Lady Sutton begged of the General a brief outline of one that she had heard her late husband speak of, and which, her ladyship observed, commenced with the word—

"Attention!" shouted the General, reminding her ladyship of the word, and striking the floor with his big stick as he uttered the commanding word.

"Yes, General, I believe you are right," replied her ladyship; "and I have no doubt that we should all be interested in a recapitulation of it, if agreeable to yourself."

"Yes—oh yes—yes!" was the eager cry which greeted the General's ears; to which he replied by a second thump on the floor with his aforesaid big stick, and also by another cry of the word "Attention!" by which time all eyes were upon him, when he commenced the following tale:—

"Soon after the close of a decisive and celebrated battle, in which, some ten years ago, I was engaged, I was reported home as killed. That such was not the case, perhaps I need hardly say; nevertheless, so insensible was I from a blow which I received on my head from the butt-end of a gun, that, when found amongst the slain and wounded, I was thought to be dead, and, in the hurry and confusion of the moment, was allowed to remain unmoved for the night. A terrible night it was, too; on opening my eyes, as consciousness returned, I found that all above and around was dark. I groaned in despair: the cold dew had benumbed my limbs so that I could scarcely move hand or foot. My face and neck were very much swollen, and my head so bruised and sore that I dared not touch it. Indeed, at one time, I

even wished that I had been killed, for I felt that I should die before morning, or at least soon after, and perhaps by the hand of the enemy. I knew not that the battle had raged on till after the sun had gone down, although it was late when I was struck; nor did I know that the victory was ours. By degrees, however, and after much mental and bodily suffering, I managed to raise myself to a sitting posture, and looked round for some sign of life; but, alas! my search was in vain, for I could neither hear a sound nor see a sign of life. Again I groaned, and loudly. I now groped around me, and soon found that I was upon the blood-stained field of battle, surrounded by the remains of men with whom I had fought both as friend and foe. Bruised and full of pain—cold and weary—and supposed to be dead, I stood wondering—from a vast field of dead men, broken gun-carriages, and other results of the battle—how I could best find our camp, and obtain the aid of a surgeon. But there was no help near, nor sign nor sound of living thing to cheer me; so that I sat me down to wait till the light of morning should show me where I was, cherishing the hope that I might soon be found by a British soldier.

"The long wished-for morning came, and, thank God, I at last heard the sound of a bugle, but for what purpose I could not understand. I looked in the direction from whence it sounded, but not a living form could I see. 'Great and good God,' I cried, 'leave me not here to die alone, for I know not how the battle has gone, nor where the enemy is!' I again heard a sound, but it was not until the sun had shone brightly; and then it came only to deceive me, for I saw no sign of life, and all again was quiet. I knew not what to think, especially as I felt unable to move but a little way from the spot to which I had crawled in the night. The

heat of the sun, however, I found to benefit my poor limbs considerably; and after sundry endeavours, I commenced a march to a little hill not far distant from where I had last sat, with a hope that if I reached it I should be enabled to see the position of the armies, and thus avoid falling into the hands of the enemy. Well, I reached it; and, thank God, by the aid of my glass, I saw the enemy retreating over distant hills and valleys, and a number of soldiers approaching me from my old regiment. 'Hurrah!' I cried, to the best of my ability, 'Hurrah! the battle is won, and Britain, brave Britain, has the victory!' I tried to wave my sword in the air, as I saw the men approaching me, but was unable to wield it; so I contented myself with thinking of the valour of our arms, and of the pleasure I should have in again seeing my country, and the friends I had left in it. When I was discovered, the joy of my men knew no bounds; and as they stood round me, loud were their shoutings of 'Hurrah for England! God bless the General!' They carried me to our camp, where my presence was hailed by officers and men with hearty welcomes. But sad, sad indeed were the tidings which met me; for, as I looked around, and enquired for one and another of my brother officers, I found that many whom I loved dearly had fallen on the field by a soldier's death.

"Attention!" continued the General, with apparent sternness: and then, in the most affable manner said, "Miss Whitworth, perhaps you will favour me by playing 'Rule, Britannia,' while I—take a pinch of snuff."

"Rule, Britannia," was played in the most spirited manner, while the General received many thanks from us for his well-drawn picture of so interesting an incident upon the battle-field.

It is no matter for wonder, after hearing so soul-

stirring a tale from the General, combined with his kindly expressions and great urbanity of manner, that I looked upon him as a hero, and as a man by whose acquaintance I felt much honoured; nor that I should have hoped for the arrival of a time when that acquaintance might ripen into a deeper friendship. How often in our contact with the world do we meet with persons whose society, be it ever so desirable, circumstances place beyond our reach, unless at very rare intervals, and those, perhaps, but of short duration. Nevertheless, it is always cheering to think of those whom we love or respect, however great the distance may be which separates them from us.

But the playing of "Rule, Britannia," was the signal for the breaking up of the Vicar's party, soon after which I was alone with him and his family. Now, to my great joy, I learned that, at all events, Miss Whitworth was no more to Lord Sutton than an ordinary friend; but I was not satisfied with this information, for I had yet to learn if Miss Whitworth had pledged her hand to any one else, and whether, if she had not, I should be so fortunate as to secure it. Thus placed, my mind was fully occupied; and although I felt some degree of consolation from the apparent pleasure she seemed to derive from my presence, I was quite uncertain whether our acquaintance would end in mutual friendship and love, in mere formal respect, or in cold indifference—if not positive dislike. But it must not be supposed that I was charmed with her external or physical beauty alone. No; but with that of her heart and mind also, blending as it did into a combination of rare and exquisite realities. My feelings in this matter, therefore, were no mere chimera, to be dispelled by the next new fancy, for I was not so much the creature of circumstances; and this was owing rather to the recollection of

certain philosophical views which I had imbibed from my late college tutor, than from any natural display on my part of that courage or wisdom which regulates one's feelings, and enables a man to pass through his earlier years without suffering either the tortures of cupidity, or that lassitude of body and vexation of mind which are certain to accompany the cherishing of an unholy love. Nor, on the other hand, did I set myself up at any time as a paragon of excellence in matters of the heart and mind, or I should not only have been scouted as a vain egotist by my fellows, but in all probability have brought myself into the contempt of sensible women. And while the beautiful has ever had charms for me, which I can—nay, do delight in, and which make my life more valuable in consequence, let me not wish for an indulgence in any luxury or pleasure by which God would be offended, and society injured.

Was I wrong, then, in loving Miss Whitworth, and in looking upon her with pleasurable feelings? Did I err in appreciating and enjoying her music, her conversation, her smiles, her looks of beauty and of love? Did I sin in desiring her affections and companionship, in preference to those of any other woman? No; unless I except the fact that my passion for her was somewhat premature, considering that I had no knowledge as to whether she was engaged or not.

In looking round upon one's friends and acquaintances, common sense and experience most emphatically tell us that a proper controul of the passions, and especially that of love, is a duty which all may obey with advantage. The truest self-respect involves the truest consideration of our fellows; but if we permit the brain to be softened or deranged by morbid feelings and aspirations, we shall become a plague to ourselves, and excite pity

rather than admiration. Courage and perseverance in a man are indeed noble qualifications, yet, without prudence, he is never safe.

* * * * * *

Rooms used by tobacco smokers have all sorts of names given them, and range from the sumptuous divan down to the sooty den; and they may be found in the lower, middle, and upper stories of certain houses, as well as in gardens, and other places remote from the vulgar eye, as taste, circumstances, and position, have determined. That in which I found myself with my friend Harry, an hour after the breaking up of the party which had assembled to celebrate the anniversary of the Vicar's wedding-day, was situated at no great distance from the room in which I slept; and besides being a smoke room, was also the "crib," as he called it, in which he professed to study. Ensconced in this "crib," and each in an easy chair, we commenced at first to smoke, and then to have a bit of private chat, both of which were rendered more pleasant and vivacious by the aid of a certain liquid called "mountain-dew," which we rendered palatable and safe by dilution with a little hot water, a slice of lemon, and a knob or two of sugar.

"This is just the thing, Melton," said Harry, as he raised the glass to his lips; "and I drink to the health of Miss Copewell, the rich heiress of Walton, and to your sweet one of Edinburgh."

"You are joking, Harry."

"Not in the least, my dear fellow."

"Then we are both out of it; I in failing to see you enamoured of Miss Copewell, and you in supposing me attracted to the north for any purpose beyond that of seeking health, which I fancy myself in some need of."

"Ahem! all very fine, old fellow, but won't do here."

"It's true, 'pon my word; and you can go with me and see, if you like. Will you go?"

"Not just now, Melton, not just now; for—for—Well, to tell you the truth, I—I—am rather afraid of Lord Sutton, you must know."

"Ah! is it so?"

"Just exactly, my dear fellow; so you see where I am, and where I must remain."

"True—very true; and I wish you luck, my boy."

"Good!" cried Harry, as he raised his glass for another sip of the whiskey-and-water; "and so here's to yourself, since you've no lady-love."

That I had not betrayed my feelings regarding his sister, to him at least, was quite evident; and while glorying in the existence of the fact, I lost no opportunity of seeking from him such information as would determine me as to my further stay at the Vicarage, or of immediately leaving for Scotland; one or other of which plans I had to decide upon as the circumstances would advise.

"But," said I, "think you not that Lord Sutton has some tender feeling for your sister, since, he seems so attentive to her?"

"Not in the least, Melton; but what put such a strange idea into your head?"

"Well, as a stranger, I was led to fancy it from his conduct."

"Don't be deceived, Melton; Lord Sutton is courteous and civil to every body, and has a strong passion for the beautiful; but he's rather poor, and—"

"Oh, I see! it's the money—"

"Yes, it's the money he's after," continued my friend, putting a rather strong emphasis on the word money.

"Well," cried I, "money is well enough in its way; but I shall never marry for it alone, even if I were to become ever so poor."

"As you like, Melton; but I shall contest for the hand of Miss Copewell against Lord Sutton, and if I'm successful, I'll warrant I shall be M.P. at the next election, and—"

"The husband of Miss Copewell."

"You have it, Melton; and I'll appoint you as chief bridesmaid upon the occasion. Ha, ha!"

"What! me as chief bridesmaid! How so?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry, somewhat confused; "you know what I mean—what is it?"

"Groomsman!"

"Ah, that's it, groomsman; yes, if you will, you shall be groomsman."

"Agreed!" cried I; "and then I can take another sketch of the old church."

"Just so."

"But you surprise me about Lord Sutton, for I certainly thought that your sister and he were inclined to each other, and that—"

"Nothing of the sort, sir; his lordship is not a favourite with my sister—at least not more so than any other man that I know of; and I believe he is aware of it. Besides, even were it otherwise, Lord Sutton cannot well marry without money, of which he is greatly in need—owing, as I understand, to the impoverished state in which the late Earl left the Merton property, which, for the most part, moreover, is heavily mortgaged."

"How unfortunate," I remarked; while, for my own part, I had occasion for much rejoicing, as I now found that Miss Whitworth was free.

"Well, that's it, and no mistake; and what do you think of my chance?"

"Well, if Miss Copewell has a preference for you, I should say that you are all right: Is it so?"

"By jingo, Melton, you are as sharp as a lawyer! What made you say that?"

"Because, as is proper, people generally strive to marry those they love best, and, consequently, you will be successful."

"Then it will be sharp work, for she is as fond of Lord Sutton as he is of her; and if a certain obstacle set up by her mother should ever be removed, I shall be beaten."

"But how do you know that what you state is correct?"

"Well, if I may depend upon the remarks of my sister, General Brent, and another, I may venture to assure you that not only is their love mutual, but it is of that sort which unfits the one for study, and robs the other of her roses."

"They are then, of course, lovers, if I understand you rightly: Is this correct?"

"That's just what I really wish to know, Melton. The truth is, however, I am in a bit of a fix; for while Miss Copewell seems most inclined to Lord Sutton, her parents are decidedly in favour of myself, as I could prove. And you must know that the vast amount of property coming to Miss Copewell is entirely in the hands of her mother, the Doctor having no sort of control over it. These are facts I am not supposed to be cognizant of, but which I assure you I learned from the best of authority. Well, because Mrs. Copewell found, soon after her marriage with the Doctor, that he had married her solely for her money, she is immensely suspicious that Lord Sutton wishes to marry her daughter for similar reasons, and is therefore opposed to his suit, but favourable to mine; as also is the Doctor, with whom I have made arrangements, which, if I succeed, will be well for both, and—"

"Fix!" I here cried, interrupting my friend,

"I believe you were right when you declared yourself to be in a bit of a fix."

"Well," he continued, "I am; but—but—what do you think of it?"

"Well, really, Harry, I hardly know what to think yet; but if I can be of any real service to you in the matter, believe me that all I can do will be done with most extreme pleasure."

"Thanks; but the worst of the fix is this: I cannot obtain a positive answer from her."

"Strange—very strange! and yet, if you consider the facts of the case—; but go on, Harry, and tell me if they correspond; and, further, let me ask you whether she has ever shown a positive aversion to you?"

"Devil a bit of it, Sir—unless I am deceived!"

"You puzzle me, Harry; but, if you will allow me, I think I can get you through the affair honorably, and to your satisfaction: Shall it be so?"

"By all means, Melton; and the sooner I am M.P. the better."

At this juncture I proposed that we should retire for the night, to which my friend assenting, we proceeded to our respective chambers.

CHAPTER V.

I had spent but two whole days at the Vicarage of Walton, and yet in that short space of time how much I had seen and felt! how much I had planned for execution! On the one hand, I was anxious to secure for myself the love and confidence of Miss Whitworth; and, on the other, I had to extricate her brother from fallacies into which he had foolishly and perversely plunged himself. General Brent was, I thought, the only safe person with whom I could consult on my friend's case, and I very properly resolved, if possible, to see him, and afterwards to arrange my plan of operation. But before doing so, I sought of the Vicar such information as would justify me in carrying out that intention, and was glad to find from his remarks that the General was a most trustworthy and noble-hearted man. "Good!" thought I; "this is truly capital; and I will do my best to hold counsel with General Brent, who I have no doubt will be of great service to us."

Although full of anxious thought, I passed most of the early part of the morning with the Vicar and his family in the garden and pleasure grounds attached to the Vicarage, without exhibiting any want of interest in the various little matters to which they were pleased to draw my attention. Harry's words, however—"I'm in a bit of a fix"—were constantly before me, and I really felt that I

could not delay seeing the General, be the consequence what it might. We had now returned to the porch, but were undecided whether to remain without, or to re-enter the Vicarage, when General Brent fortunately made his appearance at the outer gate, and we all went forward to meet him. As when I first saw him, he was cheerful, and armed with his big snuff-box-stick. He had not come to stay, he observed, but to invite Harry and myself to luncheon with him, to which Harry replied—

"With all my heart, General."

"But not with mine," the Vicar observed, "for I would rather have you all here; and, if I mistake not, I—"

"No, no, Vicar! not now, for I like to have young men at my house, so you must let them go," cried the General, as he took hold of our arms and led us off. There was neither time nor opportunity for remark, so away we went, and the Vicarage was soon out of our sight. We had not gone far when we hailed Lord Sutton, who was on horseback, and who, at the General's request, consented to spend an hour with us.

Our little party was rather a jolly one, and to me most useful, inasmuch as I was afforded a capital opportunity of meeting the men whose characters I wished to study.

Satisfied that what the Vicar had said of the General was correct, and that Lord Sutton was a dutiful and true-hearted man, I felt morally bound to be most judicious in my observations to my friend Harry, and endeavour to act justly to all. As yet I had not privately spoken to the General respecting the rich Miss Copewell, and the two aspirants for her hand; and as I found, moreover, that there were many difficulties in the way which would prevent my doing so upon the occasion in question, I decided to let it pass by for a time, and to concen-

trate my thoughts upon the object that was nearest and dearest to my heart. On our way back to the Vicarage, Harry re-opened the subject we had discussed in his "crib," and suggested that we should make a call at Walton Lodge. We did so, and were very kindly received by Mrs. and Miss Copewell—the Doctor not then being at home. We told them, on being offered refreshments, that we had just taken lunch with General Brent, and that Lord Sutton had unexpectedly joined us.—Lord Sutton! Ah; how the mere mention of his name brought the warm blood to Miss Copewell's face! and how she longed to leave the room in consequence! Saw I not in those blushes that she loved him? Saw I not in the pallor which followed them that he was dearest to her? Saw I not in her downcast and averted eye that it was his name, and not that of my friend Harry, which had so affected her? Most clearly; and from that moment I determined to aid her in obtaining the object of her choice, and so help Harry out of his "fix." But I saw more; and that, in particular, Harry was insensible to the emotions of her heart. "This woman's love shall not be lost," thought I, "if I can help it." Fond of paintings, I obtained a ready permission to examine a few of those which I saw around me, and then purposely drew Harry's attention to one at the north end of the room, in order that Miss Copewell might more quickly and easily regain that composedness of mind which, at the mentioning of Lord Sutton's name, she had lost. Nor was the *ruse* unsuccessful; for by the time I had concluded my remarks upon it, and had praised a little drawing by Miss Copewell which was suspended near it, I found, on addressing her, that the struggle of her heart was over, and that, although still pale, she was comparatively at ease. We then spoke of the persons and places represented

in some of the paintings, when it came out that Mrs. Copewell had derived her vast estates from an uncle, who died unmarried, and whose likeness was pointed out to me. Although so well educated and extremely affable, Mrs. Copewell was really a very plain woman in appearance; while her husband, besides being the younger of the two, was at once a handsome and clever man. But he had married for money; and was now settled down with a wife whose presence was hateful to him, and over whose houses, fields, and mines, he had not the slightest controul. A splendid house, carriages, horses, servants, pleasure grounds, and a luxurious table, he certainly had the privilege of seeing and enjoying, but they were one and all the property of his wife, who had the sole power to dispose of them, and in any way she pleased. Hence, then, is there any wonder why her daughter and only child should have been disinclined to answer the questions put to her by my friend Harry, who, while a favourite with her parents, would have been shunned by herself had it been otherwise with them? No; for she did not—could not—love him, yet feared to tell him so, lest her mother should be displeased and disinherit her. Some would have thought that a coronet for a brow so fair as Miss Copewell's would have been no inappropriate exchange for fifty thousand pounds sterling, as, indeed, Mrs. Copewell might have done, had she not matured an idea that Lord Sutton, being poor, only wished to marry her daughter for mercenary purposes. But my friend Harry was poorer far than Lord Sutton, and had, I blush to say, but little, if any, real regard for Miss Copewell, while his lordship, a peer of the realm, and also a distinguished and amiable man, was most earnest in his attachment to her. "Here is a complicated affair indeed," thought I; "never-

theless, it is easy enough to see that Harry is evidently quite wrong in contesting with Lord Sutton for the hand of Miss Copewell, for the very obvious reason that, in the first place, he is unworthy of her; and in the next, even if it were otherwise, she could not endure his presence, especially when contrasted with that of his lordship. "Fix! Ah, 'tis less you, Harry, and more Miss Copewell that is in a fix," I further thought; "but, if I can, I will help you both."

It is easy to create suspicion, but difficult to remove it; and although a person may be naturally well-disposed, confiding, and intelligent, a something unexpected may arise to crush the best sympathies of his heart, and make him dumb to the appeals of reason or of justice. The innocent, however, more frequently suffer for the guilty than do the guilty for themselves, and especially when the causes have a premeditated origin. But while Mrs. Copewell suffered all the painful feelings so common to those who, like herself, find themselves tied to men whose object in marrying them was wholly mercenary, she did not forget that she was a woman, nor did she fail to use that influence over her husband which was best calculated to make him feel the folly and sin of his deceit, and which, with the vast means at her command, she could well afford to savour with many petty but stinging annoyances. Despite the spirit of revenge, however, which she now and then poured upon her good-looking but luckless husband, she could not forget that he was the father of her child, or his fate might have been less agreeable than it really was. But, to their credit, the disappointed Doctor and his deceived wife were at all times careful to appear upon good terms with one another when before their friends and others, in order to preserve, if possible, their name from scandal, and save them-

selves from reproach; still, as is generally the case under such or similar circumstances, both their differences and the causes which originated them became known, while their mode or system of disputing one with the other was left to be imagined by those who cared about it. But why did Mrs. Copewell object to Lord Sutton as a suitor for the hand of her daughter? Because he was a lord, and poor withal, and she attributed his ardour of passion for her daughter to sinister or selfish purposes; and further, as she had herself been indirectly deceived through her vast wealth, she did not wish her daughter, who was her greatest treasure and consolation, and whom she loved most dearly, to become an object of misery through it. Let not the reader imagine, however, that Dr. Copewell was a base sensualist and spendthrift, or that he wished to use the money which he expected by his marriage to any but what he considered legitimate purposes; on the contrary, no professional man possessed a higher reputation than he, while his conduct in the world seemed to have secured for him the respect of all classes to whom he was known, particularly the higher, who could better appreciate the refined sentiments which he excelled in giving expression to.

But, however handsome in form or eloquent in words, Dr. Copewell was really cold and heartless to his wife, and the secret enemy of his only daughter. Alas! that man should act thus; yet how many are there who have sacrificed their own and others' happiness for the mere purpose of being great through gold! And this was the Doctor's failing—ambition! He wished to have the honour of riches, and to be looked npon as the possessor of that power which wealth ever draws within its circle, and which, unfortunately, too often separates man from his brother. But these things, however

much they were coveted by him, he was not permitted to enjoy—and he was humbled; for no sooner had his wife discovered that he wished chiefly to exalt himself through her means—that he had no love for her—and that he would not have married her but for the personal advantages which he hoped to derive from an absolute use of her wealth—than she accused him of being a vile and false deceiver, a very blight to her happiness, her life, her hopes! Nor was this all; she blasted his scheme of vain ambition by withholding from him the very means by which he intended to make it patent. But so quietly and yet so determinedly did she act upon her resolves, that his fate was irrevocably sealed, and he found it necessary to continue attending his patients, as if nothing of any consequence had happened either to himself or any one else. Happily for Mrs. Copewell, she could exist without the love of her husband, while her own was easily transferred to other objects until Miss Copewell, her only child, was born, when it was lavished upon the "sweet girl" with all a fond mother's tenderest and greatest care.

Alas for the heart that is filled with unhappy or unprofitable ambition! And here one may remark that most people know the value or necessity of money, and that it invests its possessor with an influence over those who may desire a share of the enjoyments which it can purchase. When properly employed, money is made a source from which great blessings spring; but if it is squandered away upon sensual objects, it yields evils in which poverty and ruin are but the minor parts. Essential to all, but more particularly so to married people, money is a commodity of inestimable value, inasmuch as it is the reward of labour, and the wherewithal by which most of the common necessaries of life are procured, and by which, to

a vast extent, true health and happiness are maintained. Indeed, without money, no species of pursuit could be conveniently or wisely followed; and since it may be either a curse or a blessing, the responsibility attending the employment of it assumes the form of a trust, which the community, as well as individuals, are much affected by. Looking upon money as a power, it can only be morally good in its effects when employed and accepted as an agent to advance the general well-being of society. Such is sometimes the love of and necessity for money, however, that many lives have been cruelly and wickedly sacrificed in order to obtain it; and not only by nations, but by individuals, some of whose names are recorded in the criminal history of the country. But where trade and commerce are industriously carried on upon equitable principles, that nation is morally prevented from plundering others, though it may, from other and unavoidable causes, be drawn into engagements of warfare, which from principle and interest it would avoid. My object just now, however, is not to speak of nations, but of individuals.

Marrying for money alone is too frequently a transaction in which a person may be unhesitatingly accused of being a blasphemous sacrilegist, or a vile imposter of the meanest order. If, of the two, woman is weaker than man in certain peculiar respects, it should be a pride with him to protect and shield her; but, instead of acting thus, he not unfrequently takes advantage of such weakness, and either plunges her into a labyrinth of perplexities, or hurls her into the abyss of despair. His object with her being gained—whether that object be worldly wealth, or the passion of the hour—he turns upon his heel and leaves with her no other sympathy than that which a disinterested and heartless world can offer. True, if she yet loves

him, she may patiently hope that the time will come when he will fulfil his promises, and take her to his bosom in all confidence and love; but this hope may never be realised until he has expended all his ill-got means and energies—not until he has lost the flower and beauty of his manhood—and not until he requires a nurse to make soft the pillow which he is about to bedew with the cold sweat of death. On the other hand, such conduct may cause the woman to hate the man with all a woman's hate—which, like her love, is a passion which no reason, argument, or trials, can always entirely eradicate from her heart. When virtuous, the affections are ever too precious and beautiful to be trifled with: and I cannot but remark that a just retribution is most certain, in some way or other, to fall upon the heartless deceiver; yet, however severe, it is no recompense to the deceived. Who, then, can restore to the fallen the virgin purity which she has sacrificed? or who give back to the betrayed those charms which her unfaithful one has despoiled? Who can heal the wounds of the heart when it is crushed beneath the gall of deception; or who bring back the wasted flowers of youth? Who can imagine the sorrows and sufferings of the wife and mother as she tremblingly sits out her midnight watch, vainly hoping for the return home of her faithless husband? or who can tell the evils he is creating for the innocent and unborn? Who can call those homes happy where the adulterer and adultress dwell? or who remove the cold frown that hails the bastard? Alas! the answer is indelibly written upon the faces and in the hearts and homes of too many of those around us to need any place in these pages; yet it should be sought out, reflected upon, and serve as a warning to the thousands who are every moment exposed to the iniquities of life as it is.

The bond of a marriage with one truly virtuous and loving is one of those interesting events in life which is well calculated to bring joy of the rarest and sweetest kind that can spring from human causes; and if those who are in their courting years or months would be blessed in their choice of husband or wife, it will be well for them to remember that exalted and lasting happiness in that state is only to be obtained through the most honorable and dignified conduct.

With marriage begins a new and doubly responsible life; and unless the husband and wife be equally yoked, it is more than probable that consequences will arise which must bring sorrow instead of gladness, and misery and premature death rather than health, happiness, and a ripe old age. Indeed how often has the reputation and happiness of a family been blasted by the ill-assorted marriage of one of its members! And yet, of all evils, that of unhallowed love is the most debasing, and to its slaves and victims the heaviest of curses. But, beyond the retributive action of the sin upon the individual in his sufferings and infirmities, it entails results which greatly impair the grand system that is necessary to the development of all social concerns, and reduces mankind from that standard of intellectual greatness and physical strength and beauty which ought to be the object and pride of every nation bearing the honoured name of Christian.

Without doubt, the temptations and allurements which beset young people are more or less common in every class of society; so that whether predisposed for evil or otherwise, the eye and ear early become channels through which the heart is taught a naughtiness, which, if not checked in the bud by moral courage, or some other agency, will but too soon blossom in the fascinating sunshine of de-

pravity, and cast its poisoned seeds into the lap of perdition. How cruel and selfish—how heartless and unreflecting—how defiant and wicked are they who grovel in, and live for, the pleasures and gratifications of sensualism! Yet to how many whose countenances I daily look upon, and into whose secrets it is not difficult to penetrate, is life but one continual struggle after pleasures which they at one time would have blushed at the faintest whisper of. Alas! prompted by feelings of insatiable passion, they abandon the great and glorious objects of life, until at length remorse of conscience is silenced by intoxicating liquor.

Especially by those who are merging from youth into manhood or womanhood—a time when the passion of love is easily perverted from its wise and natural course—should the vulgar, indecent and frothy language of the corrupt be shunned, lest, as it has to many, it should lodge in and destroy the peace of the soul, and turn a splendid form into a vile and trembling wretch. Even the covert hints of sin have tainted many a heart that once throbbed with a glow of freshness, freedom, and purity; and while yet young, thousands have fallen victims to insinuating and abominable subtleties.

In going forth into the world—the great pandæmonium of evil—youth needs all the strength and moral courage a well-constituted mind can produce; or, failing these, the chances are that he will become a prey to those who pander for the profits of sin, and find, when too late, how foolishly weak he was when he sacrificed his honour, health, and happiness, for the gratification of passions, which, unabused, would certainly have proved a blessing to him. Moral courage is a noble safeguard against the dangerous fallacies of youth, and wherever it exists, whether in man or woman, it is to a certain extent a guarantee of his or her fidelity, honour,

and integrity. A person who abuses nature, either in thought or deed, is no fit object for the affections of the pure and innocent, nor to maintain a position of responsibility where sound judgment, refined taste, and solemn trust are required. For the time being it may be pleasant enough to follow the bent of youthful inclinations with a zest that would be ennobling and truly great if directed to the attainment of high intellectual distinctions; but thoughts and scenes of evil seem so to occupy the minds of many, as to give them a distaste for all which would strengthen and befit them to become ornaments to society, and legitimate inheritors of that which is beautiful and right on earth.

Deceit, too, like most other evils, is sure to bring its own punishment in some way or other; and it may be expected by the deceiver upon the same just principles as the noble and true-hearted receives the respect, confidence, and love of those who appreciate truthful words and honorable deeds. As a species of lying, deceit is more despicable and dastardly than the oath of the ruffian, for which the most stern contempt would be but too small a punishment.

As practised sometimes by professed lovers, deceit is made to answer the various purposes of the seducer, the trifler, and the malicious; all of which are pests and terrors to good society, and enemies to themselves. But the deceiver speaks and acts as if this life were undying, and as if youth and beauty could be renewed periodically, or called forth at will: yet who but a vain, selfish, and ignorant coward would so conduct himself.

The conventionalities of life, however, do most seriously affect the social intercourse of the sexes, even to the defying of the will of the Creator concerning them. A partial remedy for this would be found in the removal of all unnecessary family pride,

—the securing of suitable employment for needy women, thousands of whom would find good husbands and homes in some of the British Colonies,—the awakening of the whole commuuity to a fuller sense of their obligations and responsibilities, by which means many flaunting vulgarities would be removed, and individual respect take the place of reckless depravity,—and by supplying to the public such recreations and amusements as would both invigorate and strengthen the body, interest and ennoble the mind.

From various causes, many women are prevented from enjoying that state in the social sphere to which by nature they are entitled; and much as one will regret the evils which may consequently arise, yet how far more sad is it to acknowledge that, with our present social system, those evils can only in a very partial manner be averted. Good sermons, speeches, and books are issued in abundance from clergymen, statesmen and authors; but not all the eloquence of the voice, nor all the bolts and fetters of the prison or the mad house could ever stay the emotion of the passion of love in the heart, any more than man could the current of the mighty deep! As yet, the great nations of the earth are but in part civilized; for while men delight in war, innovation, rapacity, and false glory, so will the maiden sigh in vain, and the widow mourn in solitude and sadness. But enough; let us take the world and ourselves as we are, and do the best we can for all; for there is much, very much around that may become delightfully pleasing and good, and of which we ought to avail ourselves. Forget not the love, sympathy, kindness, and care, which some of our kindred, brothers and sisters, are wont to show; nay, more, let us ourselves be loving and sympathising, kind and careful, and how soon may we become confiding and free, united and

happy! What! have we not a God above us? Yea; and He is present to uphold us when we obey His will, and equally able to chastise us when we pervert it. Look up, man! look up, woman! and behold your God. Nay, shrink not: if thou hast debased thyself, wilt thou yet abandon thyself to curse? Oh! forget not that thou art immortal! 'Tis well to live; 'tis well to be refreshed and nourished by the rich and cheering fruits of the earth; but, beyond these, we are graciously permitted to behold and comprehend many of the gorgeous and sublime beauties of nature, as they appear in all their splendour and glorious perfection around, and to aspire for a life of eternal happiness in the paradise of Heaven, with Him who has created us. Well may the wise and learned of our race call that Being the wonderful God and Father, and exalt His name above all. But man, alas! woman, alas! how often found ungrateful, inglorious, inhuman, devilish!

Glancing at the world in its social aspect,—from the speaking infant to feeble-minded elders, a mixed scene of good and evil is presented, which reminds one of heaven on the one hand, and hell on the other. To pourtray the features of beauty and excellence in the one, and to expose what is hideous and fiendish in the other, can be, however, but imperfectly done by any one individual; but those who act the chief parts therein may briefly be classed as the religious, the moral, and the depraved; to one or other of which every man, woman, and child, must of necessity belong. In a social point of view, the moral man may be a good citizen, a kind husband and father, and a public and private benefactor; but the depraved—neither. To be religious a person must be essentially moral, but no depraved being can by any means be either moral or religious at the same time. Acting on impulses

of passion, the depraved may be foolishly generous at one time, and cruelly harsh and despotic at another. Without stability, conscience, honour, respect, judgment, right feeling, or fear, the depraved classes—evil minded and degenerate men and women—form a picture which can only be paralleled when placed side by side with that of the demons of darkness.

There are those, however, who make it hard to believe—or, at all events, are slow to admit—that society in general is formed of persons who are neither strictly moral or religious; but, be this as it may, observing men—those who will see and understand the black and white ways of the world—know for a certainty that, in quiet villages, no less than in great and bustling cities, the passions of evil are loosened to a fearfully awful extent; and that, like the dogs of war, they are playing havoc. No place, indeed, is secure from the villainy, treachery, deceit, and corrupting influences of the immoral, who are sometimes hardened and shameless hypocrites, at others heedless of all except themselves; while there are those who heroically defend persons who, like themselves, extend disease, create poverty, and rob homes of their virtues, their comforts, and their beauties. Honour amongst the immoral, as with thieves, is but a selfish motive to secure a continuance of unlawful gratifications; but base conduct, and especially on the part of those who are careful to make a secret of it, often necessitates bribery and falsehood, which but magnify the consequences of the evil, and render the offender doubly criminal and responsible. Did the passion-loving sensualist but pause for a moment, and see himself as he is, when contemplating an act by which virtue, honour, health, and reputation, may be for ever lost, think you not that, unless excited by the infernal poison of Bacchus, he would sometimes, if not altogether

abandon practices which render him and others odious to all respectable society? Yes; and while one may be far from scorning the good cheer which maketh glad the heart, he is certainly no sensible man who puts "an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains." But setting aside for a moment the fact that immoral deeds are most injurious to the health and well-being of society, the individual sufferings and losses brought on thereby are such as to prevent a true enjoyment of life, and therefore unfit those tainted thereby from rightfully discharging personal and public duties. As intelligent beings, a sense of individual responsibility should stimulate a man to excel in all that would conduce to make him a truly high and noble being; but without self-respect, and a desire to be free and independent, man lives like a degraded and ignorant serf, and dies like a beast in the desert.

But one must not believe that the great evils of the day are the work of man alone, or he would be doing him a serious injustice, and, in consequence, might fairly be accused of giving to woman a licence to become celebrated in the practice of arts which all sensible people of both sexes must of necessity abhor. Without the least desire to be discourteous or ungallant to the "ladies," one cannot—nay dare not give to them unmerited praise, or place their moral condition very many degrees higher than that of "the lords of creation." But the truth of this assertion—should any be disposed to doubt it—would be more easily understood by an intimate acquaintance with life in general, and especially as it exists in large, rather than small towns; and by remembering, also, that the darker and more objectionable the deeds of persons, the greater is the secrecy and the care employed to hide them. Now, if society is to be exalted, the notion entertained about the possibility of its being

done by woman cannot be regarded but as a mere piece of idle clap-trap or nonsense, inasmuch as it is simply impossible, unless man is disposed to enter into the spirit of so desirable a movement. Society, as all must know, is more easily degraded than elevated; and if there be a man whose heart owns no ambition to contribute to the elevation of those around him, let him have free liberty to give to woman an unlimited amount of undue praise, let him increase the vanity of her heart, let him persuade her to struggle for an absolute will, and—But hold! she does not, cannot ask for these things; she only wishes to be on reciprocal terms with man, and to share with him the joys and sorrows of life. Yet exalt if you will; be great, be noble; be proud—but let it be a pride of freedom and independence, of a good name and race, of virtue and honour, of intelligence and well-earned wealth, and of your country and its laws, all of which, as men and women—husbands and wives, ye should possess and enjoy, and which ye must have ere ye can be a truly great or thoroughly Christian people.

Against courtesy, civility, kind feeling, and true sentiment, no educated or sane man can speak; nor would he decry timely good humour, pleasantry, and polite gallantry; but there are fawning sycophants who fulsomely laudate a certain class of women with adulations to which no mortal is entitled; a mere act which is not only intolerably cruel to those less beautiful or fascinating in personal attractions, but which greatly helps to make the vanity of pride and affectation more common in woman than it otherwise would be. Besides; the language and bearing of such fellows is insulting to the taste and good feeling of wiser and better men, and occasionally fatal to the vain recipient. The votary of fashion, and the worshipper

at the shrine of beauty, are captives of a system which is derogatory to the ennobling powers of virtue and honour; while their example, attitudes, and style of language, sometimes expose them to ridicule, if not to well-merited contempt. It is not against either love or beauty that one would speak, but the base purposes to which they are so often brought. Give love, then, and beauty, and health, and strength, to your children, ye parents of England; and see that they become true men and true women, for then only can they be an honour to you—then only can they be noble and happy in themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

"Where there is a will there is a way," some one has said; and acting upon the principle this adage contains, I contrived to meet General Brent, who regarded my views of the "fix" into which Harry had plunged himself, with other matters in connection therewith, in the most favourable light, and promised, moreover, to keep faith with me in what I had made known to him.

* * * * * *

We had just finished breakfast at the Vicarage, when a servant entered the room and deposited a letter bag upon a side table. "What news, I wonder?" said Harry, unlocking it, and tumbling therefrom a number of letters and papers, which he quickly sorted, and passed to their respective owners. We were all quiet for a short time, reading and thinking, when Harry, who had galloped over the pages of the *Times* with a rapidity at which I was astonished, cried out—

"Well, my dear Melton, anything from Edinburgh?"

"Yes," I replied, flinging him a letter from my relatives.

"But you will not go for a day or two, Melton, will you?" he cried, returning the letter to me.

"Well, it is true that my time is to a certain extent my own; but as I shall be expected in Edinburgh upon the day appointed, I must endeavour

to leave here early to morrow morning, however much I may regret doing so."

"Then I hope, Mr. Melton," observed the Vicar, "that you will give us another and a longer visit as you return, for I assure you we shall all be most happy to see you again, and that soon."

I thanked him; and as, in doing so, I cast my eye from one to another of his family, I more than ever saw that I was indeed a welcome guest with them; yea, more, I caught a look of love so piercing to me—yet was it so beautifully soft and pure in itself—that I was no longer left in doubt as to whether I was loved by the fair being from whom it had come, and therefore longed for the time when I might hear the faintest evidence of it from her lips.

But my friend Harry, on hearing me say that I should leave so soon, seemed confounded at the information, if not positively vexed. This I could not help; and while I felt anxious to render him every service in my power, I determined to lose neither time nor opportunity in receiving from his sister a yea or nay to the important question I had resolved to put to her. Much—very much would depend upon her answer; and although, comparatively, we had seen but little of each other, I felt that the fate of each was in my power—a prerogative which I now believed to be mine, and by a sacred and natural right.

How sweet is reciprocated love! And as I lifted my eyes in gratitude to Heaven for my new-born felicities, how supremely fair and cheering the future rose up before me! Every object, too, that was associated with my loved one was rendered dearer; while for Harry, whatever his faults, I was reserving the best of brotherly intentions.

But a day is soon gone; yet how much may be gained or lost in it! The morning had passed, so

had the noon; and well I knew that in a few short hours I should be whirling northward—further and further from my beloved. Thousands of thoughts had rushed through my mind during the day; and as I reviewed the more important of them from time to time, I saw no reason why I should not cherish the thoughts of my heart's desire, and, if possible, finally pledge myself as an accepted lover.

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The night was beautifully fine,—and the air balmy, the moon shone out her silvery light upon the spot with more than ordinary brilliancy, and the song of the nightingale was echoed into the sweetest melody in the valley beneath. The quaint screechings of the owl came not, nor was there aught to break the harmony of the scene, which was transcendently fair. A soft breeze gently waved the pliant branches of graceful trees, and the patches of ground which the light of the moon could not reach were lit up by the star-like glow-worm. The old Parish Church, too, was visible; and as the eye wandered from nature to art, the outline of its tall tower and spire plainly told me that there is nothing in this great world in which the glory of the Creator can shine more brilliantly than in man, to whom, for every good work, there is a reward. Art has ever had charms for me; and and as I passed my eye from the cluster of rich pinnacles, flying buttresses, gable-headed windows, figures, and other ornaments about that noble fabric, I reverted to the thought which occupied my mind when I took my sketch of it, and, delighted with the apparent success which had followed my endeavours to win the heart of the lady to whom they had reference, now made a final resolve to put to her a question which, of all others, was of the greatest consequence to me. Nor was I alone impressed with the magnificence and gorgeousness of the

scene, and rendered extremely sensitive by the feelings of love that had dawned upon me. No! I was not picturing an ideal beauty, nor was I sighing for the presence of some fond but absent love; but side by side was viewing with Miss Whitworth a moonlit scene from the grove at Walton Vicarage, and speaking of its many beauties. Reality is truth; and as I led the fair damsel to one and another of the openings of the trees to behold with me some fresh object which had attracted my attention, how much fairer and more beautiful than all did her lovely countenance appear under the light of moon and stars! But Merton Hall now appeared in the distance; and while looking at its great towers, and the vast forest which intervened between it and us, I thought of the base Sir Richard Guest, his object in hunting wild-boar in that forest, and of what followed him after his wicked attempt to slay the unoffending and noble Lord Sutton! Yet why dwell even for a moment upon the memory of a monster? Why bring up sad and sickening tales of treachery, meanness, blood, and murder? What! hath the past no lesson for the future? Is it for man to forget what God remembers? But enough. Yet, if man would be happy, his love must be innocent and wise, or he will become base and destructive, and perhaps himself be doomed to perpetual suffering and hopelessness. No man can sin against himself in any way without suffering the consequences or penalty of such sin, nor can he escape any more than he could alter the course of the sun. Loss of health, wealth, honour, happiness, beauty—even life itself, in many cases, is most generally the result or natural consequence of sin, or want of wisdom in individuals. But adieu, ye spirits of darkness, for I would now dwell in the sunshine of beauty, and delight mine ear with the soft music of love.

Beautiful as appeared the old church, and many other objects by which we were surrounded, there was yet one that proved particularly interesting to me, and that was the old Vicarage. In it I had first seen the lovely being by whom I was standing, and of whom I was about to ask the greatest favour that mortal could bestow; and as I looked upon its tall gables, roofs, and chimneys, its porch and windows, I could not but think that in a short time I should be far from them—perhaps for ever. I sighed. Yet why? Had I forgotten her looks of love? Had I forgotten the willingness with which she had sung and played for me? Had I forgotten the many little kindnesses she had bestowed upon me? Was she not alone with me in the grove that seemed the very abode or paradise of love? And were not my intentions honorable, pure, and just? But let us not look at the precipice upon which I was standing too long; although, as the old proverb says, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." And I may here remark, that although I had not the slightest reason for expecting a refusal from Miss Whitworth, still, such is the importance which prudent women give to questions touching their final "yea" or "nay," that, until the time should come when I must receive the one or the other from her, rest were impossible, and peace unattainable.

In speaking of the true sentiment, beauty of form and colour, loveliness of expression, and of those displays of ability in Miss Whitworth which were most excellent in her as accomplishments, I would not have any one of my younger friends imagine that I was at all insensible to the value of her other charms, or that I failed to prize her more highly in consequence. I have before hinted that, as a lover, I was never infatuated. Elevated, delighted, filled with rapturous joy, happy—gloriously happy,

I certainly have been, but never—no, never was I the slave of passion. But what were Miss Whitworth's other charms? Amiability of disposition, with habits of industry and care. Beautiful maiden, how I loved her! There was no duchess-like pride in her—no imaginary greatness—no feelings of wild passion—no deceit—no trifling with affections—no disinclination to befit herself for those duties which make woman a blessing to man, and not a curse. She was noble, pure-hearted, beautiful, and affectionate.

But let us to the grove once more. Miss Whitworth seemed not less happy than I, yet were there moments when her conduct slightly perplexed me. Instead of being discouraged thereby, I became more earnest in my resolves, and forthwith determined to make to her my first verbal confession of love, be the consequence what it might. "But hark!" I faintly cried; "there is music in the valley." And as its tones, which were soft, melodious, and sweet, came up to us, I caught Miss Whitworth's hand in mine, and said—

"Miss Whitworth, to morrow by this time I expect to be far from you; and—and—you will, I am sure, forgive me if I say I love you. But tell me—oh, tell me in return—now, before I leave, if I could make you happy?"

"Mr. Melton, I am very sorry you are leaving us so soon, for we have enjoyed your society, and—"

"But, oh, spare me any suspense; and tell me—oh, tell me, ere I depart—if I may hope for your love?"

There was a breathless silence—a deep sighing—an awful suspense—a tear—but no word was uttered by her in answer to my appeal.

"I have surprised—I fear, offended you, Miss Whitworth, yet not willingly; and if you feel that you do not—cannot love me, or if you have given

your heart to another, you will I am sure say so, and forgive me if I have caused you pain, for I would not offend you, nor—"

"You have not offended me, Mr. Melton; but how little do we know of each other, and—"

"You love me then? Yes, I knew it. But, oh, my love, let me hear thee say so; 'tis all I ask, all I desire. Speak, my love; oh, speak, and tell me, now, that you love me."

"Yes," she replied, with emotion; "and I hope I shall be forgiven if I am wrong in doing so."

"My sweet one, our love is pure, mutual; and God will bless us in it. But how can I thank thee for the joy which thy fond presence gives me, since I know that thou art mine? My love, my love, words cannot express my feelings; yet can I say that thee only do I—will I love, and may we ever, as now, be happy."

"And to morrow you will be far away: Must you go?"

"Not willingly, my love; for I much wish that our treaty of affection could be ratified by your dear parents ere I leave. But I will write to the Vicar from Edinburgh, and hasten the time when I shall again see thee, which will be my greatest, proudest desire."

"But what—"

"Nay, my love, fear not, all will be well; nor would I say so if I thought otherwise. But listen, my love, I hear some one approaching us, so now God bless thee, and—"

"Hallo, Melton! are you playing Romeo? or has yonder cornet a charm for thy music-loving soul?" shouted Harry, as he approached us from the other end of the grove; "but here, light a cigar, and let us go and be jolly over a bottle in the grotto by moonlight."

"Jolly," thought I; "jolly, I'm jolly enough as I

am, and only wish you were, my boy." But he was otherwise, nor did the "soothing weed" in the least degree exhilirate his drooping spirits.

After a short stroll, we entered the drawing room, in preference to the grotto, where we found Mrs. Whitworth reading; but had not long been there when the dear object of my passion rather suddenly left. I had seen that she looked pale, and was much distressed by it. The Vicar now came in; and as she did not make her appearance by the time some ten minutes had passed since he entered, he enquired for her. From various causes, all except the Vicar were somewhat spiritless, and but little inclined for conversation; seeing which, after sundry unsuccessful attempts to divert us, he gently betook himself to the piano, and was dashing off a lively air, when, to my happy relief, Miss Whitworth re-entered the room. She was yet pale, but without any discernible embarrassment. I could now breathe freely; felt exquisitely happy with my beloved and her friends till about eleven o'clock, when, after bidding them more than once good night, Harry and I went to his "crib," further to debate upon the subject of his "fix."

CHAPTER VII.

"This is the stuff, Melton," cried Harry, as he drew the cork out of a bottle of whiskey; "and I would not mind having a spree upon the strength of it, were we but in Edinburgh: What say you?"

"A spree in Edinburgh! why, my dear fellow, I am going there in search of health—not to make a fool of myself."

"Ha, ha, ha! but come, fill your glass, and just tell me when we shall have a run with old Jupiter again; for I'll be hanged if I don't feel deuced dull at your leaving just now: But perhaps you will not go to-morrow, eh?"

"If all is well, I shall be in Edinburgh to-morrow night; and, my dear fellow, as you have not been to Scotland, let me take you; I can promise a good reception, with amusement, sights and scenery to any extent, and of the best kind: Come, what say you?"

"Thanks, Melton, thanks; but I don't see how I can leave: Have you forgotten what I told you of Lord Sutton? Impossible, my dear fellow, impossible. I must remain here, at least for a time, although I had rather be elsewhere. No doubt his lordship would be glad enough, because he could then take advantage of my absence to secure Miss

Copewell and her "tin," and thus deprive me of my chance of getting into Parliament! No, my dear Melton, I—must—not—leave."

"As you like, Harry. But it strikes me that your chance of success would not be lessened by a month's absence, while the air and scenery of Scotland would be most beneficial and interesting to you. Besides, one makes friends and acquaintances by an occasional travel who are often most acceptable, and without whom life would not be half so sweet or desirable. Depend upon it, Harry—and I speak to you as a dear friend—you require a change; and if you will accompany me for a month, I am certain that you will return a stronger, happier man, and with clearer views as to how you can best accomplish your object with Miss Copewell. Besides, we should then have time and opportunity for properly discussing the subject, in which, I assure you, I am much interested."

"Well, Melton, to tell the truth, I hardly know how to answer you; still, as you observe, we could talk matters over, should I go, and I must thank you for the idea. But, my dear fellow, I should be very sorry to find myself beaten by Lord Sutton, for I have made up my mind to figure in the House of Commons, and must have money to work my points. I'm fond of a lark, as you know; but, Melton, let me tell you that I have dipped deeper into the principles of political economy than, until now, I ever cared to state. And as for oratory, why, I have practised that for hours together in Merton wood, having oak and elm trees for my audience. As yet, however, I must confess myself in a most confounded fix."

"Then take my advice; go with me to Scotland; and I will guarantee that, sooner or later, your darling object shall be accomplished."

"Do you mean it? Can you help me?"

appears. But just tell me—I cannot understand —you are joking?"

"I am positively in earnest, Harry; and have the utmost pleasure in saying that your sister has accepted me as her lover."

"Then I congratulate you in having won the heart of a woman who is worthy of your highest regard, and—"

"I know it—I know it, Harry; and let me assure you that the solemn vows which I have made to her will be faithfully kept by me, and with that pleasure which a true lover only can know. I am extremely anxious to hear that my suit will be acknowledged in the best manner by the Vicar, to whom I must immediately write."

"I wish you God speed, my dear Melton."

"Then we are brothers?"

"With all my heart. And now for Holyrood, for I should be sorry to keep—pardon me, Melton, but I am singularly delighted with the society of your sister, and do not mind confessing to you that I shall endeavour to make her love me. But you perhaps think me unworthy of her, and consider, as you now must, that my conduct in the case of Miss Copewell deserves your strictest censure. But do not be too severe; for until very recently, I have been infatuated with ideas which might have brought me to ruin—to madness or death. Enough, Melton—enough; let the object for which I sought the hand of Miss Copewell be forgotten. Still, I feel that I ought to apologise to her, and also to Lord Sutton, for the determined manner in which I so cruelly and so unjustly endeavoured to destroy their happiness. I never loved Miss Copewell; and if I were now married to her, I believe that the time would come when, like her father, I should feel myself to be a disappointed, lost man."

"It is not perhaps for me to blame you for what,

under similar circumstances, I might have done myself; nevertheless, I have happily avoided falling into any very great error; and therefore am freer from annoying thoughts than those who have. As yet, Harry, you have committed no wrong which you cannot repair, nor do I see any reason why you may not become one of the happiest and most prosperous of men. And I believe that you will be; but much—very much will depend upon your own endeavours, which should be guided by prudence, and maintained with honour. But you must not infer from my remarks, my dear Harry, that I have the least desire to speak of myself as one whose example should be followed—"

"That will greatly depend upon the disposition of your charming sister, and whether she will permit me to play Romeo with her in some sequestered spot about—"

"Harry, Harry! you are too bad. Did you hear? Nay, you could not—did not play the spy upon us!"

"On my honour, Melton, I did not. Indeed I should now have been ignorant of your love for my sister, had you not yourself told me of it. The real truth is this: when I saw you and my sister in the grove, I had but recently left Walton lodge, after an unsuccessful attempt to—to—"

"I see, I see, Harry, you were upon electioneering business, not love, and therefore did not—"

"No, no, not exactly that; but—"

"I have it, my dear fellow; and will just tell you that, in my opinion, Miss Copewell might have been yours ere now, had you but loved her as man ought to love woman. Soon after I was brought to observe that lady, I formed a high estimation of her disposition and abilities, and likewise thought her beautiful—which opinions remain unchanged. But I may be wrong in my views;

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nevertheless, I quite believe that a man's first object with a woman whom he could and would make his wife should be to ascertain whether he really loves her, and for what reason. If he does, and no cause exists to show him that he is imprudent in doing so, he may fairly venture on the delightful mission of courtship, without fear of consequences. I am aware that feelings of like and dislike are very strongly fixed in the minds of men and women; and that many would rather not marry at all than be compelled to do so against their inclinations. But woman's instinct in judging of matters of the heart is proverbially notorious; and although she frequently loves where it would be better for her to dislike, there are yet those of her sex who, strong as may be their passions, can—nay, do—love well and wisely. My friend, as soon as a true woman discovers that her wooer is unworthy of her, she scorns him, hates his selfish and sordid heart, and repels his overtures with—"

"My dear Melton, you are killing me! Consider, if you please, that I am an altered man, and, I hope, no longer disposed to rise to any position the honour of which I am unworthy of. I have confessed to you that I was wrong in desiring Miss Copewell's money, when I had no feeling towards her by which she could even have suffered herself to respect me; and, moreover, I have told you that until recently the noblest sentiments of my heart were silenced by means of my——By heavens, Melton, if I do not forget this affair I shall go mad!"

"But you must not do either; nor must you distress yourself on account of anything I have said."

"Then do not, I beg of you, say one word more about it."

"My dear Harry, I love my sister dearly; and although I believe in the possibility of your doing so, yet, by all that is sacred to her heart, let me ask

you not to see her again, if, as you alone can know, your motives are anything short of the best and most sincere."

"Enough, Melton—enough! I cannot hear more. Your contrasts will kill me; for not only do they make me appear false as a man, but unkind as a brother. No more, if you please, Melton: I will —yes, I will go to—"

"Holyrood!"

"No, Melton, you cannot trust me; and if I never again see the first and only woman who has awakened within me a love that shall know no change, think at least that I am willing to go from her presence rather than that you should doubt my honour!"

"Harry, I have not spoken to offend you, but to make you dearer as a brother; and if I failed in the endeavour, do not suppose me capable of opposing you in anything by which you would be really benefited and made happy, but consider—nay, firmly believe me your willing friend."

"It shall be as you wish; but truly I have been tortured in mind so much from causes which are already known to you, that, what with the recollection of their effects and the disappointments which passing events bring me, I feel much inclined to think myself doomed to misfortune."

"No, no, Harry, you are wrong: no sane man can be said to be doomed to misfortune; but he may—nay, he must suffer for his folly, and it is well for him that it should be so."

"All that you have said may be perfectly true, sir, but if I have lost your confidence, pray tell me, and not only will I avoid meeting Miss Melton, but yourself also, however much I may regret it."

"My dear Harry, pray understand me. Now, not only do I wish for my sister all the blessings which could result from a happy union with some

kind and sensible man, but I also would, nay—am willing now to aid you, if I may, in obtaining any and every object by which your own real interests could not fail to be permanently and satisfactorily established. But you have seen so little of my sister—know scarcely anything of the "mysteries of the heart"—nor have you especially cared to prepare yourself to become brilliant in any but political pursuits. If, however, you sincerely believe you could make my sister the first of all your earthly objects, and that you could delight in giving to her that care and regard which her loving heart is so fully capable of appreciating and responding to, why, my dear Harry, I her only brother will gladly assist you in your proposal."

"But look here, Melton: How know you that I do not love your sister as wisely and as well as you seem to infer you love mine?"

"Well, I might mention several reasons; but one, perhaps, will be sufficient."

"Pray let me have it, Melton."

"Well, then, it is because, so far as the question before us goes, you have no sound knowledge of your own heart, or what it should desire, and therefore cannot well depend upon it; while I, in desiring to enter the married state, am careful not only to understand the nature of my affections, but likewise am most anxious to render them truly worthy of being appreciated and valued by the fair and good creature who is dearest to me. Now there are certain essential qualifications which are absolutely necessary to produce a lasting harmony of mind and feeling; and from the fact that they are based upon moral and, consequently true philosophical grounds, those possessing them have positive rules or laws by which the whole course of their conduct may be wisely and pleasantly guided. I very well know what ardent love is, and what it is to feel the

possibility of defeat; nevertheless, I am bound to remind you that the question of love is a peculiarly momentous one, and merits earnest, solemn thought. Generally speaking, woman looks up to—confides in man; and whether this principle in her be natural or otherwise, surely man, since he is in so many respects dependent upon her, cannot but be acting for his own good when he speaks and acts by force of reason, rather than by impulse of passion. But enough; you now know my meaning, and will, I am sure, believe that I should not have spoken so plainly to you, had it not seemed necessary.

"Melton! say no more about it, if you please; for, after all, it may be better for me to forget a being whom I might idolize, rather than truly love and cherish. That I erred in my conduct towards Miss Copewell, I have admitted; but, sir, in seeking the love of your sister, I am actuated by feelings, which—new though they may be—are yet most honorable."

"Harry—my dear, dear Harry, let me assure you that you have, in the few words just uttered, convinced me of the sincerity and goodness of your heart, which I cannot—will not longer doubt; and, believe me, I never could have spoken to you as I have, had I not feared that, in the event of your being united to my sister in marriage, each of you would be disappointed. As I before observed, I love my sister; and if I can promote her happiness and your own, I shall take every opportunity of doing so, be the turn of events what they may."

I now saw that my friend was out of his "fix," and by reason of a cause which I had not thought of. Thus far I was pleased; not only because I was thereby saved the trouble of carrying out the projects I had formed regarding him, but because I saw that a time might come when, through my uncle's influence, he would be enabled to rise to the

position he had so much spoken of, and for which he had made strenuous endeavours to befit himself. But there was yet much for him to learn ere any intelligent and honest man would be justified in nominating him as a fit and proper person to represent the people in Parliament, as he himself afterwards found. Fortunately, my uncle (Mr. Norris Melton) well knew the requirements necessary to qualify a man to become a true representative; and to gain his confidence and influence was to ensure success. But he was somewhat stern in character, always decided, and especially so with young men. When he had occasion to rebuke, it was in language significant for its truth and reason, and most generally severe. Not given to flattery, his praises were well meant, and therefore acceptable; and, as I before observed, although a decided, he was not a hasty man. "Always understand and believe what you say," he more than once observed to me; and again: "Always speak and act as a man, or you will appear as a thing of no importance, be laughed at by the world, and despised by yourself." Such were some of the traits and maxims of the man to whom I introduced my friend Harry; to what purpose we shall see. How I managed to please him so well on most occasions I cannot exactly say, but have often thought that it was owing to his good management of my disposition when a little boy, and of the judicious education I received while absent from him,—which, as I was very early left an orphan, proved most acceptable to me, and for which I shall always feel the deepest gratitude. As the kind and good guardian of myself and sisters, it is but natural to suppose that he not only properly cared for our health, morals, and education, but the property left us by our father was also equally turned to good account, and, as we became of age, duly placed at our disposal. But

he did not consider us free from his control even when arrived at that particular time of our lives; nor, happily, were we disposed to withdraw ourselves from him. As good children are wont to look up to and take counsel from wise parents, so did we—as he had taught us to do—look up to and take counsel from him. It is more frequently the fault of parents than of children, that the latter in their turn become bad fathers and bad mothers. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is very possible, however, in the contaminating atmosphere of vice with which most of us are surrounded, to find a well brought up youth enamoured with objects which he knows to be vile, yet to which he clings as if they were necessary and good for him. Not until men and women more generally learn what is essential to real happiness and prosperity, practice self denial, become less sensual and less selfish, and respect themselves and one another more, can there be any hope for the well-being of future generations. Bad indeed is that son or daughter who brings sorrow to the hearts of good parents! But what father, or mother, or guardian, can hope to see the children of their charge become an honour to the human race, unless they themselves live lives worthy of imitation? Generally speaking, children are intent listeners, great observers; therefore, be your relationship to them what it may, never give them cause to attribute to you anything of which, upon reflection, you would be ashamed; or, for a certainty, unless you be without proper feeling, you will regret it to the latest moment of your life.

As guardian over my sisters and myself, my uncle did his duty to us nobly. He had promised to watch and protect us till we should arrive at years of discretion; and in the performance of the solemn

duty he had thus pledged himself to, he never upon any occasion abused it. He loved us, and was especially anxious that we should love him. Nor did he, as some unfeeling, brutish parents do, have recourse to the rod for every little error in our conduct. No; nor did he, even when the use of it was absolutely necessary, so use it as to make us look upon him with horror, and fear his presence as one would that of a cruel and heartless tyrant. For my own part, I know not how a child can love a parent that treats it inhumanly, nor one who, on the other hand, abandons it to the caprice of its own self-will. But to our tale. My uncle had great wealth, and, being unmarried, had willed most of it to us,—a fact of itself which tended to make his authority over us seem more real to him. As yet, however, he was trading as a great and highly intelligent merchant in London, and from various causes possessed immense influence over persons whose names ranked high in the aristocracy of this powerful kingdom; so that, what with his anxiety for us, his care for himself and his concerns, together with the particular attention which he gave to some of the more important topics of the day, the reader must not be surprised if, from time to time, this good uncle of mine be allowed to speak pretty plainly in his nephew's "Old Parish Church."

After detailing to my friend Harry certain of the facts just narrated, with others that were not less necessary to be known to him preparatory to the meeting which was to take place at Holyrood, we instinctively felt ourselves somewhat embarrassed at the prospect before us, inasmuch as our principal objects, if to succeed as we could best desire, would, sooner or later, have to be laid plainly and truthfully before his searching eye and keener mind, for his rejection or approval. For myself, I must confess that my mind was fully made up, although I had

not received, nor indeed had I applied for the sanction of the Vicar to my hoped-for union with his daughter; so that, when the time should come in which I might deem it necessary to make them known to him, I felt that I was fully prepared to receive from him either a smile and kind words, or a cold look with threats. But how would my friend Harry fare with him, should my sister at some future day agree to the proposal he was so anxious to make to her? The question was perplexing to me at times; because, to some extent, he had the appearance of one indifferent to results, and was often frivolous in conversation, except when prompted by ambition or interest to show his principles, when his language and bearing showed a dignity of mind and form to which he might not inconsistently have had more regard. But, as yet, our darling objects were as things desired, rather than possesssed; consequently, we were in an excited state of existence, still not without patience and determination. How sweet is the hope by which one strives to possess the loved object of one's affections!

Now, had my friend really loved Miss Copewell, my conduct would have assumed a different aspect; but it was evident that he had not; so that I was justified in removing him from a place where, had he remained, he might have fallen a victim to the bitterest of disappointments, if not to something worse. That he should fall in love with my sister had never for a moment been thought of by me, nor could I satisfactorily imagine how his statement of the fact would be received, especially by my uncle. In personal appearance and address, Harry Whitworth could be most fascinating; he was young, too: Was I surprised, then, when my sister looked upon him approvingly? Certainly not. Besides, she spoke to me of him as "my

charming friend," and so on; and, by other little but unmistakeable tokens, gave me to understand that his presence was by no means unwelcome to her. Of the sincerity of his love for her I had now no doubt: he no longer spoke of impracticable schemes and vain hopes, but of how he might best secure her affections, the confidence of my uncle, and what—as a man of education, but with no great means—he had best do with himself. Harry was an altered man, and for the best. Feelings akin to those which I had observed in his sister now broke forth in all that simplicity and earnestness which is ever inseparable from truth; and as in course of time their reality became more and more apparent, so was he more respected by me as a man, and better trusted as a friend. I here repeat a favourite maxim of mine: "It is something to know what and how to love."

We rode from the Castle to Holyrood Palace at a brisk rate, fearing, from a cause which must be obvious to the reader, that my sister and my uncle would be displeased at our long absence. Arrived at that royal residence, and after searching sundry of the nooks and corners with which it abounds, we passed on to the abbey church, where, near to the "royal vault," we espied them. Now, I am proud to say my uncle had an exquisite taste for the beautiful, and a considerable amount of antiquarian knowledge, with no ordinary discriminating powers; therefore, I was not surprised to find him highly interested in, and carefully examining, the roofless and shattered fabric by whose dark walls we were surrounded.

"Ah!" said my uncle, soon after we had come up to him, "here, and in the adjoining palace, kings, and queens, and dukes, and lords, and priests, have played their parts, and this ruined chapel is their monument! True emblem of mortality," continued

he, looking up to the tops of the archless piers which were before him; "what a lesson do thy dismantled walls teach man! My God, my God! I tremble at the thought!"

"Of what are you thinking, my dear uncle?" said my sister, seeing him seriously affected with some unexpressed idea.

"Of Rome, my child, of Rome, and her priesthood; and I would to God that, like this relic of ancient Scottish art, she were perishing as surely."

"You dislike Popery, I perceive, Mr. Melton," observed Harry to my uncle; "nor can I wonder at it, for it is the bane of true religious and social progress. For my own part, I dislike despotism of any kind, and must declare that I especially abhor and detest it when assumed by the clergy of any Church."

"You have just cause for detesting spiritual despotism, Mr. Whitworth; and I hope that, in avoiding the errors of Rome, you will likewise be careful to seek out and act up to the truth as it is set forth by the clergy of the Church of which I presume you to be a member—I mean the Church of England, which is, you must well know, in many important points of doctrine, the very antipodes of that of Rome. And if I may be allowed further to express myself, I readily declare that the more I think of her baneful dogmas and vain ceremonies, so much the more do I feel certain that they quite overbalance or destroy what good she does. It might be argued that Romish ecclesiastics conduct themselves with the very best of propriety in this country; that they are charitable to the poor, and ever willing to visit and comfort the sick; that they are devout, zealous, and so on; and to infer from these characteristics that they are as harmless and as worthy of confidence as any other class of ministers; but, sir, be they ever so respectable,

ever so learned, or ever so attentive to their duties, we must not forget that they are priests of the Church of Rome, nor what their attitude and influence would be could they but have the balance of spiritual power in their hands. As it is the policy of the slave-holder to subdue the slave by means of the lash, so would it be that of the priests of Rome to demand obedience from the people, by deluding them with mysteries, by charming them with ceremonies, and by enthralling them in ignorance; thus, as of old, keeping them down to the low and degrading level of ignorant serfs by means not less infamous than those which emanated from the holy inquisition of father Dominic. Despotism is the secret but powerful element necessary to the maintenance of Popery; and wherever it exists, gorgeous and symmetrical architecture, beautifully executed sculpture and painting, grand and solemn music, and even the eloquence of the voice of the priest, are but as baits to delude, to entrap, to enslave those who, rightly taught, would worship—not human powers, not human creations—but that God to whom we owe our existence, and all that can be enjoyed in time and through eternity.

'Tempt me not. The scene is fair,
Music floats upon the air,
Clouds of perfume round me roll,
Thoughts of rapture fill my soul.
* * * *
Here amazed—entranced I stand,
Human power on every hand
Charms my senses—meets my gaze,
Wraps me in a world of maze.
But the place of prayer for me
Purer still than this must be.'

And why purer? because, as employed by papists, they rather check than aid the soul that

would rise above them. One must not intend art as a local agent to attract the soul to itself, nor must one consider himself a Christian because he can appreciate and enjoy the beautiful, whether it is in nature or art that he beholds it. But for what, let me ask, does the papistical priest reserve his most solemn tone of voice, the music of his choir and organ, his costliest vestments, his richest and most fragrant incense, his most brilliant lights, his humblest bows, his greatest reverence, his choicest flowers, his holiest words and looks? Nay, I ask you not to judge those who worshipped Jupiter, to ridicule the votaries of Juggernaut, to laugh at Sibyline prophecies, or at the fallacies of the Brahminical system, to sneer at the memory of the fallen cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Balbeck, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and others; no, nor do I ask you to persecute the Jew and the Turk, but to tell me with child-like simplicity from whom the papistical priest receives the power to mystify the truth? Is it from Heaven? No! Can that man be a Christian who would stand between me and my God? For what are my reasoning faculties? For what am I born? Away, sir, with inventions that, if believed in, would blind my reason, sink me to the level of those who worship and make offerings to Vishnu, and force me to look upon those differing from me as heretics, and therefore subjects for the inquisition! What! not talk of these things? not raise my voice in favour of a liberal church and constitution, which, when compared with that of Rome, is as light to darkness, as glory to shame! Surely I will."

"Sir," replied Harry, "my own views perfectly accord with yours; but allow me to observe that there is very—very much in art which I admire, and which I think of necessity should be adopted in our churches, especially in an age like this."

"Certainly—certainly! and I confess myself willing enough to uphold the dignity, grandeur, magnificence, and majesty of our national style of architecture, and to hear the music of the solemn anthem as it rolls along the sacred courts of our cathedrals; but I will never sanction the use of any of God's gifts to purposes which that Being could not bless or approve. It is quite possible to build a church in which the highest abilities of the architect, the sculptor, the painter, and the musician, may work together in the sweetest of harmony with those of the preacher of the holiest of Christian doctrines. Indeed, a combination of these five powers upon the eye and mind, if properly developed, could not fail to establish an undying love for the truth and beauty of art, nature, and religion. The art of preaching, however, is a Divine art; and the greatest artists upon earth are they who adorn the hearts of their fellows with the image and love of heaven."

"Very true, sir," said Harry, looking steadily at the face of my uncle; "and it is with extreme pleasure I acknowledge the justness and necessity of your remarks."

"Yes; and I must further observe," continued my uncle, "that the time has arrived when not only should one say something about architecture and music, but about the men also that Christians are wont to look up to as their spiritual teachers and guides. Emphatically utilitarian in business and commerce, so should we be in all religious principles and practices. The want of energy and soul which many, very many, of our preachers exhibit when in the pulpit, is now not only a notorious, but most grievous fact. Of their learning, respectability, and good intentions, I have no doubt; but they certainly are not eloquent in the pulpit, and therefore not only fail to attract the

public ear, but, in this respect, are stumbling blocks to the progression of Christianity. An eloquent orator is generally sure of a multitude of hearers, even though he made his oration from the steps of some great portico, town hall, or even under the boughs of some sturdy forest oak. But I must not be misunderstood in what I have said, for, with all my admiration of art and respect for artists, I must yet observe that, however grand and glorious in high art a church may be, unless the preacher is eloquent and convincing, the people will go where these powerful qualifications are to be found, and regardless of the character and name of the place in which the orator places himself—even though it be a theatre or other place having walls adorned with paintings and forms the very opposite in character and object to what is sacred and most desirable. The signs of the times are not sufficiently observed and studied by the clergy; and although I will not press my subject further upon you, Mr. Whitworth, yet, presuming at no distant day you will belong to that important body—I may observe that the spirit which moves certain classes of the people to worship in theatres and town halls, rather than in appropriate and proper places, must be taken for one of these signs, and one which ecclesiastics might well pause and reflect upon. And if, as I believe, the masses are daily becoming more intelligent, so much the more necessary is it that the language and expression of the "pulpit," should be supremely eloquent, more decidedly instructive, and always tending to Christian unity."

My uncle had said more upon the subjects of art and religion than either of his listeners expected; but, beyond setting him right as to his mistake in supposing that my friend was preparing himself for the Church, we simply gave him our thanks for the hints he had given us, and then resumed our

inspection of the interesting relics which had suggested them.

After surveying such portions of the palace as were most interesting to us, we ascended the mighty craigs of Salisbury, and, with wondering eyes, beheld from its summit that most glorious of panoramic views of nature which, until the frowning and cheerless squares of Edinburgh were erected, was without one distracting speck to mar the scene. Heavy, dull, and colourless, the classic architecture of that ancient city reminds one of a series of cold, prison-like abodes, rather than of buildings upon which the eye could travel with delight as it passes from one to the other. Nevertheless, in all places, as at Edinburgh, it would be wiser and more consistent to adopt the architecture of Greece or Rome, than to encourage architects in the production of designs in some of which eccentricity takes the place of purely original and noble conceptions: it not unfrequently happens that excessive ornament is made to usurp the highest and most important principle in design; and when this is the case, elegance of proportion and beauty of expression are wanting. No matter what the style of a building, whether classic or Gothic, harmony and appropriateness should be apparent upon every side of it, or it fails to be true in principle, purpose, and effect.

But our little pilgrimage to King Arthur's Seat had tired us, so that, at the request of my uncle, we gently walked down the "Queen's Drive," and soon afterwards found ourselves doing the best we could to satisfy the cravings of hunger. My uncle was very quiet during dinner, nor was there much said by either of us till some time afterwards, when, to my surprise, my uncle asked my friend Harry whether Lord Sutton had yet completed his education at Oxford, and also if he had seen him at Walton since the commencement of the then present

term. We were not, as certain people sometimes improperly say, thunderstruck; but, if a thunderbolt had passed through the room, we could not have been more amazed, nor might we, in consequence, have felt that our position was much more distressing. True, my uncle knew many noble lords, and I might have cheered myself with a few ideas which the fact would readily have suggested; but he had spoken of Walton, also, and in such a manner that, with my knowledge of him and his ways, I was led to think he would next ask him how he had left Miss Copewell! However, although sorely touched, Harry's reply was given with less embarrassment than, under the circumstances, I expected, and not without a token that the nobleman's name which my uncle had just mentioned was distasteful to him. Our conversation was now directed to other matters; but it will be seen hereafter that my uncle, for some purpose then unknown to us, was occasionally sarcastic in his remarks, to rebut which at the time would have been imprudent in either Harry or myself.

Generally speaking, my uncle's ideas were practically and morally good; and after reminding Harry of certain remarks which he had especially made to him while we were in the chapel, he further observed—

"But, Mr. Whitworth, since you do not think of becoming a clergyman, permit me to ask what you intend to do with yourself; for however great a man's wealth or titles, or whether he be simply a person respectably connected and posessing a fortune sufficient only for his own ordinary purposes, I yet hold it right that he should perfect himself in one or more pursuits the practice of which, while agreeable and profitable to himself, ought always, in some way or other, to be of positive service to his country. Yes, Mr. Whitworth, the arm of social

progression requires strengthening; but unless he who wishes to become great can look upon man as his brother, and employ for his general welfare those powers of thought and feeling which the Christian world would recognise and admire, he cannot but be an enemy to himself, his race, and that just and holy Being to whom he is responsible. To me, your country gentleman is too often a mere fox-hunter, an indifferent and sometimes tyrannical magistrate, a purse-proud owner of lands and tenements, or a person wholly absorbed in contemplating small things, and such as he considers most necessary for his own individual enjoyment. But we must not live for ourselves alone, Mr. Whitworth; for there is work—glorious work for us all to do, and if we would do our duty and be happy, we must individually be identified with all that is great and good."

"I quite agree with you," said Harry; "and by no means think that either great wealth or titles of themselves constitute greatness; nevertheless, in justice to myself, I hope it will be found that I am neither indisposed nor unprepared to advance public as well as private objects. And in acknowledging myself as one not yet practically identified with any particular pursuit by which I could at one and the same time benefit my country and myself, yet, as I have but just observed, I trust that opportunities will arise which will enable me to place myself in that position which, according to my own and others' views, I should be justified in aspiring to."

"I see, Mr Whitworth, I see," said my uncle; "but go on, if you please, and tell me, if you feel disposed, how you would employ your time, and to what purpose?"

I must here confess that my uncle's remarks just now were most confoundedly annoying, filling us as they did with fear at one time, and surprise at

another. Had he not mentioned Lord Sutton's name, I should have thought much less of the critical mood in which he at this time appeared; but he had done so, and from the inference his observations suggested I was forced to consider that he was not only upon intimate terms with his lordship, but that he also knew something of the "fix" in which I had found my friend at Walton. Thus placed, I would have assumed some authority over the tendency of my uncle's remarks, had I not felt certain that Harry was capable of defending himself. True, the voice can speak what the heart may not feel; yet such was now my confidence in my friend, and seeing him able and disposed to answer my uncle, that I preferred to become a watchful listener. But whatever my uncle knew of Lord Sutton, it is certain that of my engagement with Miss Whitworth, or of Harry's wishes regarding my sister, he could have no idea, unless, indeed, as to the latter, he had observed between them any of those little indications of reciprocated but unavowed love which had so unexpectedly dawned upon them. Of a verity, our position was not a common one. To my uncle's remarks Harry replied—

"Sir, in the first place, I wish to be actively engaged; but, as may seem natural, only in such pursuit or pursuits as would yield me general satisfaction; and in the next, I may observe that I have had thoughts of becoming a representative of a section of the community in Parliament. For the present, however, the question remains open for further private consideration, so that I must be permitted to withhold from you any expression of ideas not yet matured."

"Very true, very true, my young friend," cried my uncle; "nor would I for one moment be thought capable of venturing upon ground where I had not

in some way or other a right, however little it might be; so that you will, I believe, attach to my words no other meaning or object than if my nephew had given utterance to them."

Now these remarks were well nigh bringing my uncle into a rather serious quarrel—not only with Harry, but with myself also. Happily, my uncle perceived that he had said enough upon the subject, if not too much; and therefore, finding himself looked upon with surprise rather than interest, he very wisely spoke of other matters, and soon afterwards proposed that we should accompany him and my sister to an exhibition of modern paintings, for which he had provided tickets; we assented, feeling that the change would be a very acceptable one.

Little more was said that day between Harry, myself, and my uncle; but much, very much, was spoken of and arranged by us after we had bid him and my sister good night. Harry expressed his fears to me in strong language; and although he did not consider my uncle's insinuations unwarrantable, he yet hated the thoughts they occasioned him, and therefore was by no means so good humoured and sociable as I had usually found him. He again reviewed his conduct to Lord Sutton and Miss Copewell, with other matters in connection therewith, and then spoke of my sister, for whom I perceived he had a very strong and increasing regard. I observed that she was well disposed towards him, and that I quite believed the time would come when my uncle would think him most thoroughly worthy of his confidence and respect. But notwithstanding all that I said or did, he was not willing to be consoled thereby, so that my friend and I parted for the night not in the most amiable of moods, at which we both felt annoyed. Not feeling sleepy, I had no sooner secured myself

within my chamber, than I opened my writing desk, and was soon penning a note to the Vicar of Walton, which, in the simplest manner, was to tell him how I loved his daughter, and that I only wished his reply by return of post in order that, if he could behold me as his future son-in-law, I should present it to my uncle, to whom I was about to mention the circumstance. I did not seal the letter on completion, but left it open till morning, when I went through it, and then put it into the fire, saying, at the same time, "the Vicar would only thank me, and tell me that, with his little knowledge of me, he could not sanction my proposal until further consideration." Now, I have ever disliked the feeling of suspense, and as a policy not unworthy the consideration of others as well as myself, I may state that I have upon all occasions endeavoured so to act as to avoid it. But in this particular case I certainly had great difficulty, for I well knew that I could not see Miss Whitworth without the consent of her father, and therefore, as it was my greatest desire, so was I the more careful to restrain the impetuosity of my feelings, and to speak and act with the utmost delicacy and prudence. I now had a private discussion upon this and other subjects with Harry, who, after receiving certain instructions from me, penned a few lines to his sister; while I, for the sake of fulfilling a promise which I had made to Miss Whitworth, wrote to the Vicar of Walton to announce our arrival, at the same time mentioning the extreme pleasure I should have in again visiting Walton. I said nothing, however, of what had transpired between his daughter and myself, but was especially careful to let her know, through Harry, that I should speedily do so. After posting our letters, we met my uncle at breakfast, and were pleased to find him in a very agreeable humour. He talked of the

various places he proposed we should visit, and went so far as to say that he should take many opportunities during our progress of instilling into my friend's mind such pieces of information as would, if properly accepted and duly acted upon, the sooner enable him to arrive at some distinction in the political world, preparatory to his becoming, should he be fortunate enough, a parliamentary man. Now all this was extremely cheering, yet, in our present position, Harry and I were often writhing under the pressure of thoughts already awakened by what my uncle had said, and as frequently wondering what would turn up next. "But," said I to my friend," courage, perseverance, and discretion, will carry us through, so let us make the best of these qualities, and I believe we shall never have cause for regret in maintaining them.

We had now passed several days in Edinburgh, and the oftener Harry addressed himself to my sister, so did his attachment for her increase. And while I saw that his presence was welcomed by her—indeed, that it had become a decided pleasure —I could but regret that a day might come when their new-born feelings and aspirations, however delightful, might be crushed by the interposition of my uncle, and at a time, perhaps, when they least expected such a misfortune.

By this time we had heard from the Vicar and Miss Whitworth; and by the same post my uncle received information which greatly tended to bring about most of the important events yet to be narrated in these pages.

My uncle was an observing and thoughtful man, and made a point of judging deliberately, not in any case liking to find occasion to alter his decision. I knew this to be the case; and although he must have seen that there were indications of something

more than an ordinary friendship springing up between Harry and my sister, yet he had never, either by word or look, forbade it. All things considered, I declare that his conduct never puzzled me more.

A day or two after my uncle received the information just alluded to, and about an hour after we had breakfasted, a waiting man entered the room in which we were sitting, and handed a note to my uncle. He read it instantly; and having quickly glanced at the card which was enclosed, gave answer that he would go below and speak with the gentleman who had sent it. He did so; and it was not singular that Harry now gave me an enquiring look. My sister being present, however, I could not well give expression to the thoughts which the note occasioned, so that we were forced to await the course of events as they would be further developed. That the note had reference in some way or other to my friend I was quite inclined to believe, although, even if my sister had not been present, I should have kept the idea to myself, and for two obvious reasons.

My uncle was not absent from us more than ten minutes, and, simultaneously with his entrance into the room, he proposed that we should take a carriage ride for a couple of hours, while he transacted some private business with the gentleman he had just seen below. Pleased with this unexpected opportunity of quitting the presence of my uncle, we at once prepared to effect his wish, were soon without the pale of Edinburgh, and for a short time were thus relieved from the pressure of some of the many unpleasant thoughts which my uncle had, we thought, but too often awakened. We frequently spoke of Walton, its old Parish Church, the Vicarage, and other pleasing matters, the recollection of which to me was delightful, although I

was far from being happy. My sister listened to our remarks with great apparent pleasure, at which Harry and I were very much elated; but there were moments when I thought only of my loved one, and of the pleasure I should have in again seeing her, for I could not, would not, admit the possibility of any objection being raised by which I might be deprived of making her wholly mine. I would wait, then, patiently for the coming of that happy time.

We had now travelled some four or five miles; I perceived that Harry was in the best of humours, truly fascinating, and thoroughly sensible. My sister had indeed charmed him, and by his every look and word the fact was fully demonstrated to her and to myself. I believed him eloquent, I believed him true. My sister was frequently very thoughtful, and more than once looked at him in a peculiarly penetrating, searching manner. I was surprised that she did so, but allowed the circumstance to pass without noticing it to her, yet not forgetting it myself. Harry observed that I had promised to revisit Walton; he also expressed a hope that the time would come when he might have the pleasure of introducing his family to her and my uncle, and of pointing out to them those beauties of the place which I had so recently and so deservedly praised. "Yes," thought I; "and unless baffled by opposition of the most stern kind, it shall be so: Am I not engaged to, and am I not determined to marry, the Vicar's daughter?" I further thought. Now I had hinted to my sister this resolve; and was glad, therefore, that, in her reply to Harry, she did not offer any objection to his proposal, should it prove as agreeable to my uncle: "Ah! but will he sanction so desirable a meeting?" thought I.

Upon our return to Edinburgh, and just as we

were within a hundred yards of the hotel at which we were staying, my sister espied my uncle walking with a gentleman with whom she had occasionally seen him in London, and who she had every reason to believe was his principal law agent. Now my uncle was unaware of our return, so that when he entered the hotel he was surprised to see us, and evidently annoyed at our having arrived before the allotted time, although he did his best to appear otherwise.

"This is strange," thought I; "and the business of this law agent, or whatever he is, must of necessity be important, and of a private nature, or why should my uncle be so particular in his movements?" My sister had recognised him, however, and our curiosity was aroused concerning the object of his visit. For my own part, I must confess that I feared nothing from my uncle; yet, considering the conduct of my friend in respect to the Copewell affair, and the respective positions in which we had placed ourselves since my arrival at Walton, we might possibly have become liable to severe censure and mistrust.

It now became necessary for me to obtain my sister's fullest confidence, and to her, as far as Miss Whitworth and myself were concerned, I made a full confession; and lest a time might come when my uncle should, from information which he had already received or might yet obtain, be especially opposed to Harry's suit with my sister, I carefully described the "fix" I had found him in at Walton, at which for a time she was much surprised and hurt, but eventually considered it, with myself, as the result of his having been infatuated, first, by the ill-advised counsel which Doctor Copewell had given him, and secondly, in addition to the ambitious desire he had to become a Member of Parliament, by the encouragement that gentleman's wife had

given him to secure the hand of their daughter. But however censurable my friend's past conduct had been, I had every reason to believe he was most thoroughly sincere in his affection for my sister, that he was without any of those corrupt habits which I had observed in some of my former companions, and that, with a little discipline and care, he would in due time become eminent in that pursuit for which, despite the ideas that were associated with it, he certainly seemed adapted. With these impressions on my mind, together with the fact that I highly esteemed my friend Harry, I was most willing, and upon right principles, to offer him all the assistance in my power.

Not perceiving any material change in my uncle's conduct towards any one of us, however, as day after day passed on, I concluded that his business with the law agent could not have had reference to Harry, or, if so, strange indeed must be the reason, I thought, by which it was withheld.

One often hears of, aye, and sees, the influence woman has over man for good or ill; and it is with extreme pleasure I recur to the fact that, soon after my arrival in Edinburgh with my friend, he felt it in all its ennobling loveliness, and, inspired thereby, became elevated to that standard of moral excellence which, being inseparable from virtue and honour, gives dignity to the noble name of man. But whether my uncle had observed this change in him, I know not: still, as an observing man, he must have seen that there was a growing and mutual attachment springing up between my friend and my sister, and his silence upon the subject was not a little perplexing. Was he waiting to be spoken to about it? Was he waiting for letters which would crush our young hopes? I knew not. Perhaps he, too, was in a "fix," and wondering how to proceed. Was he? I knew not.

Against Harry's manner and appearance before my uncle nothing could be said; while it is possible that both, with other causes, were working favourably for him. Time would prove, I thought; but my love and anxiety for Miss Whitworth were now beginning to affect me rather seriously, nor could I well proceed further until I had either written to or seen the Vicar, and obtained his consent to my proposed union with his daughter. I wished also to state the facts of the case to my uncle; but in the face of the newer circumstances which had arisen I could not do so, and therefore began to think myself likewise in a "fix." "What is to be done?" thought I; "Shall we elope? Shall we fly to a foreign land? Never! years of waiting would be repaid in the joy of receiving the blessings that would be given to us if but then our hoped-for union could be celebrated in that old church of Walton! But the flowers of our youth may have departed ere that time might come; or—No! she never could love another; she would wait—she would hope, as I hope now. But I will do more than hope; I will not rest till she is mine; and those who are near and dear to her and to me shall witness an union, not only of hands, but of hearts also. Were I offering to that noble girl either poverty, a worthless name, a shattered constitution, or the falsehood of a sensual gallant, I might tremble at this the very threshold of my life, and stand awed by my own audacity. But I have wealth, and it shall add to her comfort; I bear a good name, and it shall be an honour to her; I have a strong arm, and it shall shield her; I have a heart, a mind, and these shall live for her—these shall be a glory with her. Who dares, then, to snatch from me my fair one, my Mary? The sweet cord of her life may be snapped—the envious may whisper her false—enemies may stand beside

us—but none save Heaven could sever that bond of sacred love which binds her heart with mine. Were she homeless, poor, and arrayed in the thin garments of poverty, 'twere the same to me now, for I love her, and I know that she would be the joy of my days, as I should be the joy of hers. Stand back, then, ye who would counsel me against her happiness—my happiness! Ah! I see her now, and she smiles; I see her half-raised, loving eyes, too, and her graceful and beautiful form, as when I led her forth to the grove; I hear her speak, too, softly, tremblingly, yet O how delightfully! What? a dream—a fancy! Who dares to repeat the words? Ah me! how painful is this suspense—this uncertainty! Be still, thou beating heart; I would conquer, yet not in anger, nor as one who looks on woman as his footstool. Hold, then, thou panting heart, hold! Yet—Ah! this is how woman tears the heart of man—this is how she draws him to her soft embrace—this is how she makes his destiny. But is this really love, and will it last? The lustre of that eye may fade, those rosy-hued lips may become livid, that form become repulsive, her very breath a guard to her approach. I, too, may become a thing upon which she could scarcely look even with pity. But has love aught to do with things which are not? Yet why do I ask? Are not my hopes built, fixed, immoveable? Is not my fancy realized? See I not in my Mary all that could please my eye, my ear, my touch? Why, then, should I think one thought which I would not speak to her? Why, then, should I not cast my lot with the same indifference, the same selfish view, the same vulgar object, as most other men do? Yet—ah, what do I really seek? Dare I tell? Oh, woman, why does thy presence haunt my life? Did I call thee, or didst thou come unto me? Tell me, oh, tell me.

Is it thy beauty of expression, thy beauty of form; the language of thine eye, thine heart, thy lips; the softness of thy manners, thy intelligence, and thy sentiments; thy esteem, thy benevolence; thy love, that compound in which heart, soul and body are enveloped? Is it these things which affect me? Ah, yes; which delight me, which fill me with rapturous emotions, which give me joy. Is it not so? Ah, yes; and I love thee for them, and will protect thee because of them. Indeed, these are thy features, characteristics, nature, all. Am I selfish? In gratifying my own desires do I not also gratify thine? Love for love. I listen to the music of thy voice, and to that which thou bringest forth from the sweet-toned harp; I receive thy tender care and watchfulness, thy sympathy, thy love, and I am pleased—I am satisfied. Art thou? Ah! we are agreed; we love each other—we please each other. We are confiding, truthful, virtuous, happy. No vain thoughts disturb our loving hearts, for we love dutifully, and cannot, nay, we will not be separate.

"Let us prepare, then, for a life-long banquet of love, of peace, of joy. What! on earth! Love and peace and joy on earth! Where is it? Ah! I am doubting—yet not thee, not thy pure and noble heart! But oh how fading, how transitory is all external beauty! Should I love thee wert thou less beautiful? Oh! what am I saying? Could aught remove the charms of thy fair countenance? Could disease, or fire, or accident, or sorrow, affect them? Yes; and if thou hadst no soul of intelligence, no love that could not speak itself in words and actions pure, how sad would be thy life, how sad would be thy death! But oh, my Mary, thou art yet all beauty; it sits upon thy brow, it flashes from thine eye, it encircles thy waist, it speaks in every limb; it dwells within thy

mind, thy heart, thy soul. And what now? Oh! for thine own sake and for mine preserve all thy beauty. But can you do so? Try. Fear not me, your lover, the would-be companion of your life, for I will respect thee in all things, and esteem thee for thy goodness; be kind unto thee, and faithful, ever loving and free. Virtue is thine, love is thine; virtue is a beauty of the soul, so is pure affection.

"But hold! I'm tiring, my brain is wearying of these matters, and 'tis not well to dwell too much upon a subject which excites my passions: 'all excitement is expenditure.' Heigh-ho! what a queer thing love is!

"Confound this cigar—or is it the whiskey? Oh, oh! I'll go to bed. Well, and what next? Ha, ha! Love is a queer thing! Ho, ho!—Tut! What am I saying? All I know is this: Miss Whitworth has beauty, good sense, good taste, good health, a good disposition, and a warm and loving heart, and it is for these things I love her. Are they not enough? For me—yes. Good night, good night!"

Into what strange and fanciful reveries men sometimes get. What I have just jotted down came rushing through my mind as I was gently puffing the smoke of a cigar one night, and immediately after I had written a letter to the Vicar of Walton, of which the following is a copy:—

"*Hotel, Edinburgh.*

"Reverend and Dear Sir,

"Before I can again see you and your dear lady and daughter, I must earnestly beg of you to grant me the favour of your approbation to a proposal which I had the honour of making to Miss

Whitworth during my short stay under your hospitable roof. I will not trouble you with a very long letter: I love your daughter dearly. She is not unwilling to look upon me as one who could make her happy. I write for your consent to acknowledge me as your future son-in-law, and shall be most happy to place your reply before my uncle, should you entertain my proposition. I offer you every apology for any pain this communication may cause you, and at the same time beg to observe that I am fully prepared to give you satisfactory answers to any questions you may desire to put to me.

"I have the honour to be,

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"WILLIAM MELTON."

"*To the Vicar of Walton.*"

I was awake betimes the morning following the night on which I had written my letter, and took the precaution to seal and post it before meeting my friends at the breakfast table. "This is my affair," thought I, "and for the present I will wave the subject, and patiently wait the Vicar's reply. He cannot of course offer any objection." These were my ideas. A sensitive man should always be prepared to encounter defeat; it may be difficult for him to do so, and indeed it is difficult under any circumstance; because, in most cases, if a man wishes to succeed in an undertaking, he naturally throws the best of his judgment, his genius, his talent, and his interest into it, expecting success, or he certainly would never make the attempt.

The Vicar's reply to my note came by return of post, a copy of which I here produce.

"*The Vicarage, Walton.*

"My Dear Mr. Melton,

"Had I been offered the best bishopric in England I could not have received a greater surprise than that occasioned by your letter, which I have just read. I will not say that I should object to your calling here on your return to town; but, as a father, I am bound to sanction no proposed union with my daughter unless I have every necessary proof that that union would be a blessed one. Sir, my daughter is a blessing to us: she is loving and dutiful to us. Without her my home would seem desolate. Nevertheless, if she should desire to marry, and we find that the object of her affections is truly worthy of her, we would give our sanction and our blessing to such an undertaking as you have proposed. But for the present allow me to suggest a further consideration of your question, which is of too important a nature to be answered without serious if not solemn thought. You are at liberty to show this note to your uncle, Mr. Norris Melton, whom you have of course previously consulted.

"Yours truly,

"H. G. Whitworth."

"*W. Melton, Esq.*"

I was in a queer sort of mood when I opened the Vicar's letter, but queerer still when I had read the latter portion of it. The best of us are not always amiable, nor can one always trace the reason why he is not so. Much thought, too, upon any particular subject may lead one to dislike it altogether. Strange indeed are the ways of life to many of us poor mortals. It was clear, however, that the Vicar would not oppose my suit with his

daughter, if I could but be as sure of my uncle. True, I had not spoken to him upon the subject, nor had I mentioned Miss Whitworth's name in his hearing. And even if at the first I had thought of doing so, I could not, owing to facts which I need not recapitulate. But, beyond these, there was another cause: I knew that, good as was my uncle in many respects, he erred in matters which will yet be noticed.

Again I wrote to the Vicar, making known to him the extent of my affection for his daughter, and what my means and connections were. Of the vows I had made to Miss Whitworth I said nothing to him, fearing lest through my own apparently premature conduct she should in any way suffer. However, being fairly launched into the fascinating sea of love, I was determined to keep a sharp look out, and to make a prosperous voyage.

My uncle was fast tiring of Edinburgh, as indeed we all were. A change was proposed, and after making a rapid tour through some of the more accessible of the Highlands, we spent two days in the busy City of Glasgow. I was surprised to see so much squalor and depravity in that great workshop of the north. I had seen nothing equal to it in London or Dublin. Harry and I paced the streets till a late hour on the day of our arrival there, which was on Saturday. Rows I had seen before, and much else about which I need not trouble the reader, but never saw I anything so demoralizing as was witnessed by us that night in Glasgow. "Mountain-dew" was everywhere, and the demand for it increasing, for to-morrow would be the Sabbath—a "Scotch Sabbath," when those only who are "up to the dodge" can get even a "wee drop." Where the poor wretches dwelling there hide themselves every Sunday I cannot imagine, but certain is it that order and decency prevail on that

day in the streets, and every body and every thing seem "shut up," the Kirk and other places of worship of course only excepted. Faithfully to realize such a scene, one must witness it.

However, if the reader's imagination be good, he will not only pardon me for what I have said about the rows we witnessed in Glasgow, but also, and more especially as digressing from our tale, while I describe a scene which I saw on board a steamer which was about to leave Dublin for Liverpool.

It was a glorious harvest day, and some hundreds of poor Irishmen had come down to take ship for this side of the water, in order that they might earn a "trifle o' tin" while their little "praties" were getting into big ones. To a man, every paddy had his shilelah, nor was there any doubt about the hardness of the *matarial* of which those useful weapons were made. Well, the vessel was chartered to carry just two hundred of these harvest men or reapers; but, owing to a desperate rush made by the whole body assembled, over three hundred of them got on board, despite the orders of the captain, the shouts of the crew, and the blows and threats of policemen.

"'Tis here we are," cried lots of them; "and divil an inch will we stir to plase anybody; so spake aisy, you fungaleering thieves as is taking notish of us."

"Arrah! Bad luck to you all who would hurt a poor crathur's head like mine!" cried one of the leaders, who, in clearing the gangway, had knocked one or two of his comrades into the water with his shilelah.

That more than two hundred of these poor paddies could remain on board was impossible, and, moreover, the vessel was now ready to sail.

"Clear the deck!" shouted the captain to the sailors, who, by-the-bye, had taken the precaution

to have something in the shape of a shilelah in his own hand: "Clear the deck!"

"Och!" cried several paddies, would ye murther us?"

"Murrah! Murrah!" bellowed one who had lost his hat, and who had just been pitched off the captain's walk into a coil of ropes below: "D'ye call that discrashun? by St. Pether ye desarve to be kilt intirely!"

Crack—whack—crack, went the shilelahs upon the heads of the sailors as they vainly attempted to drive them off. The captain became furious, and joined with his crew in a second endeavour to get rid of the "varmints," when a row of the most spirited kind took place, which was ended thus far by the captain and sailors beating a hasty retreat. Some half-dozen policemen now came on board; a road was cleared, whereupon the captain and his crew again made their appearance.

"To your duty, men!" cried the captain: "Clear the deck!" The united force now set to work right earnestly, but the paddies were invincible, and would not be driven off: Irish blood was "up," and it was evident that nothing short of "murther," or a rough passage over the water with sea-sickness would bring it down.

"Hurroo! huzza!" shouted the paddies, as the policemen one after another fell sprawling upon the deck.

"Take that!" (crack, whack) "and that" (whick, whack, crack), cried two of the sailors as they belaboured the pates of the beleaguering party. "Huzza, huzza!" now shouted the paddies, for the captain, sailors, and policemen—all had been tumbled down below. "Hurroo! hurroo!" was again the cry; and then "tunther and turf!" "blood and turf!"

"Take care of your shilelahs, boys," roared one

of the leaders, "for we are into it, and that's it! Huzza! we'll show the dirty spalpeens how to be dacent: Huzza!"

More policemen were now seen coming to the rescue, and the row was likely to become more serious than I had expected.

"They're coming, they're coming!" shouted some paddies, as the policemen approached the vessel, and forthwith prepared to give them a warm reception. Argument after argument was used on both sides, during which the captain and his men managed to come upon deck again, taking possession of the captain's walk, which they most gallantly kept.

"What's the row?" asked the policemen who had come up last. The facts were soon stated by the captain, and a suggestion was made to the effect that all above the specified number which the ship was chartered to carry should immediately be removed. This was met with a perfect shout of execration, amidst cries of "Remove the gangway, and let's be afther havin' revinge by sinking the vessil intirely."

"Murrah! Murrah!" shouted others, would ye be afther sinking too?"

"Divil a sowl is there here, sure, as is fit to spake at all at all, so I'll jist tell ye how to settle this matter at onst; let's just fight for it, and see who's to go, and who isn't!" said one Tim, as he was called, and who, from his size and build, looked as if he could thrash any half-dozen about him. "Huzza, huzza!" shouted this knowing worthy; "I'm your boy; and, tunther-an-ouns, I'll be afther —[whick-whack, crick-crack, went his shilelah on the tops, sides, backs, and fronts of the heads of his nearest comrades]—telling ye who's to go!"

This was enough; a row commenced, which, although of short duration, excelled anything

of the kind I had ever seen: indeed it was a regular shilelah fight, and one which proved beyond dispute that Tim was the best "broth of a boy" of the lot. Crick-crack, whick-whack the shilelahs went again, and head over heels went those of the paddies who happened to be nearest to the gangway, until the number to be expelled found a sure footing on terra firma.

"Huzza, huzza!" shouted Tim, with those of the others who were permitted to remain on board: "St. Pathrick for ould Ireland, and Tim for himself! Huzza!"

I never shall forget Tim, nor the proud manner in which he walked the deck after the re-establishment of order. He was dressed in the true "ould" Irish style, with his crushed hat stuck gaily on one side of his head; and from his hands, which he had comfortably crossed behind him, hung his now celebrated shilelah.

Of the shilelah I shall not mention more, but can confidently assert, that soon after Tim had comforted himself and his one hundred and ninety nine friends with the idea of an immediate departure for England, all ill-feeling was apparently forgotten, and the utmost good humour prevailed instead. Even those who were expelled the vessel shouted huzza when the gangway was pulled in, and again when her paddles signalled that she was off. I cannot conclude this hasty sketch of Irish life, without paying one little tribute to the ladies of Dublin, of whose grace and beauty the most fastidious paddy need not be ashamed. Most men have a peculiar fancy for a bright eye and a neat ancle; it may happen, however, that some cynic will "query" this statement, and thus make a hypocrite of himself. Always put a man down for a fool, should you ever hear him depreciate the beauty of woman. For my own part, I hesitate not to say that the

word beautiful may be as consistently applied to the ancle and foot of a woman as to her hand, where they do really merit the application; but, (Oh! shame,) I could not well be brought to acknowledge anything in the shape of an ancle, or a hand, or a foot, beautiful, unless—What? why, plainly speaking, that each were—Will you pardon me if I complete the sentence? or is there any word not quite so nasty in its meaning as dirt? to be sure there is, and here it is—clean. There now you have it. I am very well aware that a diamond is a diamond, and that a foot is a foot, and so on; I also know that, when polished, I can see the beauty and lustre of the diamond, and that I had rather wear it so. But enough; still, as cleanliness is considered by some to be next to godliness, one cannot much err in recommending it, whether it be in connection with beauty, or otherwise. In justice to myself, however, in introducing the subject into these pages, I may state that the remarks are not made without obvious reasons. Plain speaking is not always pleasant, but when it becomes a necessity —a duty, only those for whom it is intended will, one may hope, be affected by it. It is not enough that those parts of our bodies which are most seen should be kept clean, but every part, from the top of the head down to the longest toe-nail. Is it nothing of consequence to a woman that she should be called "nice, tidy, and clean?" Surely a woman with these qualifications, whether she be beautiful or not, is more fitted to become a wife, a mother, than one who has them not. Certainly she is; and I strongly advise young men, and old ones too, who wish to marry, not only to look out for a bright eye and a neat ancle, but for the cleanly, the tidy, or, in other words, those daughters of England who are capable and willing to become good housewives and good mothers.

I need say but little of the animal passion of love: I have read somewhere, however, that "people love because they cannot help it," and if so, hence the imperative necessity of marriage. Love between the sexes is a natural condition; but without esteem, benevolence, or pure affection, its object would be identified with principles in which selfishness and depravity predominate. I have heard "preachers" rant against the animal passion of love as if it were an evil in the human family: Would they not have been as wise if they had ranted also against eating and drinking, and denounced both practices as evil? Rather should they say, "Govern your passions; live soberly; love not that which is evil." Cant from the pulpit falls upon my ear with worse effect than an astounding lie. Ask any sensible and true father if he be ashamed to own the "olive branches" which surround his table! Ask any fond and wise mother to disown her first-born! It is no shame to love; but see that your love be not evil. Do not be angry with me for this little bit of quiet reasoning, you who affect to "shy" at the sight of a lady's ancle, or I shall, perhaps, tell you that you are more of the animal than the man, and that neither your craft nor your calling shall disguise the fact. I am inclined, indeed, not to spare you now, for you are of that sort which would rather beg than work, rather sneak in at the back door than boldly knock at the front.

Comparatively, women are in many respects great sufferers, unfortunate, unhappy. Bright and practical as may be the hopes of the many, it is to be feared that they are not so often realized as society must of necessity wish. The causes are many; the reason not their own. Pity that so beautiful, so loving, and so intelligent a being as woman should so often sigh in vain for any privilege or right

which should be enjoyed in common with man! Were she his inferior, a creature without human faculties and feelings, the case were different, and she would be nothing but a soulless pet, a thing born only for man's pleasure. But the subject of what is called carnal love needs further consideration even here. 'Tis what all are born to, 'tis what all are influenced by, 'tis what many suffer through.—What! suffer through love! Woman does, man does: woman must suffer through love, man need not. Once for all; marriage is the safeguard of health and honour, and if it is necessary for man, so is it for woman. The idea of marrying for a home is most ignoble and repulsive: let it be from wise choice you would marry, or not at all. But the great question of the day seems to be, not what woman is, but what shall be done with her. Are the sexes born equal? Are their desires natural and simultaneous? Are they alike human? Are they alike in intellectual capacity? Are they alike the beloved creatures of their Creator? If they are, the cupidity of man is dooming him to become a subject fit neither for earth nor heaven, but rather for perdition. Woman was intended to be the companion of man, a help-meet for him; not his slave, neither his plaything nor his idol. This great truth is elsewhere set forth in these pages, but I again give it place, that it may not easily be forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

When the Copewells, Lord Sutton, and others, heard that Harry Whitworth had gone off with me to Scotland, great was the astonishment his sudden departure occasioned them. None knewt he object of his leaving, none knew of the great change which had come over him. Harry was not at Walton, and that was all people could say. If one more than another pondered over the cause, it was Miss Copewell. Was it possible that she loved him? Was it possible that she could love a man who only wished to marry her for her money? Was it true that she loved Lord Sutton? Who had told Harry that she did not love him? True love lies deeply hidden within the heart, and can only be called forth when confidence is established in the object of that love. Miss Copewell was unhappy; she was the child of parents who wished to rule the tenderest feelings of her heart; even her father wished to sacrifice her upon the altar of Mammon, and for his own gain. We have seen the father against the mother, the mother against the father, and him against his child. He had made a contract with Harry Whitworth; he had offered him his child that he might have a portion of the wealth which, in the event of marriage, he hoped would be given to her and to Harry. His object was spite —spite against his wife, she who would have given him her all had he but loved her. And that

spite he carried even to the heart of his beautiful and unoffending daughter—his only child. Well for him would it have been had he repented in time; but the spirit of hatred and revenge had taken possession of his soul, and, like a fool, he cherished it. To Harry he was a tempter, to his wife false, to his child a scoundrel. Yet he had his admirers; and it was even said that there were "ladies" who pitied him. Alas for the love of woman when it is given in weakness!

General Brent was particular to hear and observe what he could, and made but few enquiries. Like many others, he thought Miss Copewell loved Lord Sutton, and that Lord Sutton loved Miss Copewell. There were various reasons which led him to believe that such—and more—was true of them. Social intercourse is not love, but that giving and receiving of such actions and words which all may admire, all desire, all receive. Now Lord Sutton was a most courteous, kind, and really benevolent man, while Miss Copewell merited in every respect the many praises which it was his lordship's good pleasure and good taste to give to her. Many believed he loved her, some said that his eye was rather upon her wealth. Lord Sutton needed money, so did Harry Whitworth. The one sought her because he loved her, the other because he loved her money. I will not say that Harry would have cared for her had she been the opposite in character and in style from what she was, even though rich; but, be this as it may, it was with her gold, and not with her virtues and her beauty that he was charmed. But such was the confidence Mrs. Copewell had in my friend, that she considered him most honourable, and in every way worthy of her daughter. What false discernment, what blind judgment was hers! Lord Sutton trembled at the possible issue of it. Come death when it would to

her, all her mines, and houses, and lands, and gold, would go to Miss Copewell, did she but marry the son of "the good Vicar," as she used to term Harry's father.

And how went matters at the Vicarage in the meanwhile? Was all well there? Did Miss Whitworth feel the absence of her brother and myself? Was Miss Copewell glad that Harry was far from her, out of her sight? Was she delighted that Lord Sutton lingered near her, called upon her, rode with her, pressed her hand, sighed for her?

The month would soon be up when Harry was to return home, and when I was to fulfil my promise by making a longer stay with him in that home than I had done upon the occasion of my first visit to it. Hearts were beating with a rapidity unusual to them: fates were to be determined: Doctor Copewell was puzzled—his wife was in a rage: General Brent was hopeful: Lord Sutton was loving and pausing, pausing and loving: gossip was busy: but little was known, nothing settled. Those who were more immediately concerned, indeed, seemed afraid to speak—at least those in Walton. It happened, however, one fine evening, that Mrs. Copewell and her daughter called at the Vicarage to see Miss Whitworth, when various little village matters were talked over by them, and the following disclosures were brought out by their respective daughters, but not in the same apartment, or within the hearing of any save their own dear selves. Both were somewhat pale, both were anxious, both sighed; pieces which they and Lord Sutton and I had sung, were looked over, but there was no singing nor instrumental music upon this occasion. Each felt that the love, the society of man was dear to them. They looked at each other, they talked; but there was something strange, something unexpressed in their look, their conversation.

My sketch of the old Parish Church now caught the eye of Miss Copewell, when she said—

"Oh my dear Miss Whitworth, how I should value that drawing if Harry had done it?"

"Should you? but he does not draw, dear, nor sing either, you know, and he will do scarcely anything I wish him, although I try all I can to persuade him."

"I am sure you are very kind: I do so wish that I had a brother."

"Poor Harry, how glad I shall be to see him back again! I hope the change will do him good. But, do you know, dear, I fancy that he will not long remain at home, because, in his last note, he talked of accompanying Mr. Melton on a projected visit to the continent, and then—but what ails you dear—are you unwell?"

"No dear, no; but—Oh! I cannot tell you; no, dear, I cannot; do not ask me; I shall be better soon."

"I will not pain you, dear: But has anything happened—tell me?"

"Oh no; but, my dear Miss Whitworth, I—no, I must not speak; Lord Sutton is very kind, but I do not—"

"My dear, dear child, how sorry I am to find you unhappy; for you are so good, and ought to be so very, very comfortable in mind."

"Yes, dear; but how can I be so? Oh! that I were loved as I love, then—but I must not tell you dear, no, I must not, or I should offend you?"

"Offend me, dear! no: Still,—Oh! you do not, I hope, love Mr. Melton?"

"Mary, Mary, you have confessed what I never would have asked of you; I do not love Mr. Melton, nor Lord Sutton, but—"

"Whom, dear, whom?"

"I dare not tell; were you not his—"

"You do not, cannot, mean Harry?"

"Oh, yes, yes I do, I do, but, oh, Mary, my dear, dear—" The conclusion of the sentence was lost, not even whispered out, for the heart-troubled girl fell fainting into the arms of her dear companion.

* * * * *

"Thank you, thank you, oh, thank you, my dear Mary for your kindness, which I can never repay. Oh, I am so much better now: Do I look pale? Do you think my mamma will know? How foolish I was; but, dear, I am so much better: You will never tell of me, dear, will you?"

"Never, dear, unless you should wish it; nor must you tell of me: Was I not foolish, too, in asking if you loved Mr. Melton?"

"You wished to know: may I ask if you love him? No, dear, do not hesitate to tell me; yet not unless you are sure that you can trust me with such a precious secret?"

"I could trust you with all, dear; but I have promised not to—to—"

"My dear Mary, I will not ask more: may you be very happy: I am sure you will: Mr. Melton looks a man of honour, and sings and speaks beautifully. I like his open countenance, and the dignity of his bearing. At first I thought him stern, cold, and even cross-looking; but when on one particular occasion, I heard him address you, I believed him warm-hearted, kind, and affectionate. But he looked troubled: Do you remember, dear? Did you ever notice him when Lord Sutton was by your side? Ah! Mary, he loves you; and, oh, how I wish that I were loved as well!"

"I wish you were: but, oh, what am I saying?"

"You are excited, dear: be calm—let us both be calm."

"Yes, dear; but he will soon be here; and then,

oh, then, then, oh, what will happen then? Have I done wrong, dear, have I? Is it wrong to love?"

"Not as we love, dear."

"May we be happy then."

"But, my dear Mary, I know not that Harry loves me as I could wish: and, oh, if it should be true that—that—"

"What, love?"

"Will you forgive me if I tell you? but you could not, would not forgive me, were I to tell you what I read of him?"

"Read of him, dear, what do you mean?"

"I will show you the note, dear; but not now, as it is at home."

"What note, dear?"

"I will let you see it, if you will go to the Lodge with me, then you will know why I am so unhappy."

"I will go with you, dear, and we will leave by the grove way, as it is nearer. But has my brother done anything wrong?—No, no, I hope not: Papa would sink under such a thought!"

"Oh no, dear; only the note makes me very unhappy, and I do not know how to act. No one besides myself has seen it in Walton, that I am aware of."

"I am very glad of that: let us be quick: I will tell my mamma that we have determined upon having a short walk."

* * * * *

"Here is the note, dear; do not be offended with me, dear, for showing it you, will you?"

"No, dear; but let me read it." Saying this, she read as follows:—

"A friend of Miss Copewell takes the liberty of warning her against Mr. Whitworth, jun., who is seeking her hand in marriage solely that he may possess her money. A near relative of Miss Cope-

well is not her friend. If she wishes to marry a man who loves her, she should marry Lord Sutton. She should avoid Mr. Whitworth; never listen to his overtures. He does not love her, does not respect her. He is seeking her for her money. Miss Copewell will never know who sends this, but she may believe it true."

"How cruel, how wicked, how unjust!" remarked Miss Whitworth, after having read and re-read the note; but, oh, Miss Copewell, who could have sent it? Who can say that my brother could be so mean, so unkind?"

"I cannot tell, dear; I have thought of—no, I know of none that would injure either your brother or myself; yet, dear,—oh, do pardon me in what I am about to say—I fear to trust him, and I am very unhappy, and have suffered very much through my fears. You know, dear, how miserable my papa and mamma are, and solely on account of this nasty money. But if I knew that Harry really loved me, I would give him all that I may have. Oh, Mary, my dear friend, what shall I do?"

"Let us wait till he comes home, dear; let us watch his proceedings; my papa would never allow him to marry, unless he believed him most honorable in his intentions."

"Now, you are angry with me, dear, for showing you the note, and for telling you that I have not full confidence in him?"

"No, dear, I am not; but I am extremely sorry that it was ever sent to you, and should be much more so if I knew that there was the least truth in it. Really, my dear, I am much pained, and do pity you from my very heart. But you were quite right in showing me the note; and if my brother is endeavouring to deceive you, forget him as a being unworthy the name of man, and centre your affections only where they would be honoured,

prized, and loved. I have read, dear, of wicked men; but, oh, I think an unkind word or look would break my heart. But are you really afraid to trust my brother?"

"Oh, my dear friend, how it pains me to answer you! Believe me, dear, I am very unhappy. Oh! how gladly would I fling all at his feet, if I but knew that he loved me. But, dear, until I know, until I feel that he does, never will I give him my heart, never will I trust him. May you be happy, dear; may you never know what it is to feel that you cannot confide in the man you love. Mary, dear Mary, can you tell me what to do?"

"Let us wait, dear, patiently, hopefully; we are friends, and we will help one another."

"My dear friend, how good you are!"

"Not better than yourself, dear. But can you tell me if you ever saw in the conduct of my brother towards you anything which you disapproved of?"

"Oh, I cannot tell; it is so hard to speak against one that I love."

"If you have, pray tell me: it is your duty."

"Then I will be candid: I have; but I will not pain either you or myself by speaking one word more against him: I will take your advice, dear, and wait—patiently and hopefully."

"Perhaps that will be the best, dear."

* * * * *

Lord Sutton was sitting in his study at Merton Hall in an abstracted mood, and apparently indifferent to all outward circumstances. He was alone. His thoughts ran chiefly upon one subject—love: one person—Miss Copewell. But at times he had other thoughts upon other matters—he wanted fifty thousand pounds, and it was necessary that he should have it. He loved Miss Copewell, and would, had it been possible, have married her.

The Countess, his mother, had opposed the idea, but was giving way to her son's not unreasonable argument. At any moment his lordship could have married a woman with greater wealth; but, disliking her, he would not.

All honour to the noble lord! He had a heart, a mind; could love, wished to love, and would love, but only such as was, according to his taste and feeling, worth loving. Of his taste and feeling I have elsewhere spoken: Lord Sutton was a true nobleman, and distinguished by many of those admirable qualities which are peculiar only to those who have lofty intellects, and generous and wise dispositions. He had come of a stock, too, that had risen to honour and greatness by every noble and good endeavour possible to man, and well did he maintain that honour and greatness. By his mother, the Countess, he was dearly loved and prized.

Unfortunately, the domain of Merton was heavily mortgaged, and consequently a source of much trouble and annoyance to him. The Countess was well aware of this, yet was she against his marrying any but a titled lady, however beautiful, and good, and rich she might be. Now, Lord Sutton, although a dutiful son, had determined to marry from choice, not by recommendation, or solely for money. Happiness, not pride, was his object; and he was thinking how he could best secure that object when I spoke of him as sitting in his study. Near him was a favourite terrier, which, upon hearing footsteps, barked, and then ran to the now opened door to welcome the Countess, who had come to enquire of her son the cause of his remaining alone so long.

"Frederick, my dear boy," cried Lady Sutton, upon entering the study, "why are you here so long?"

"So long, mamma, have I been here long?"

"Lady Lucy says two hours, and thinks that you must have fallen asleep."

"Lady Lucy! Oh, how I hate that name!"

"But, my child, do you—"

"No! mother dear, I will not hear anything about Lady Lucy, or her wealth either. You will pardon me for what I have said, but I would rather lose Merton Hall than marry Lady Lucy. If all be well, I will marry Miss Copewell: you admire her, I love her. But I know not yet that I can secure her hand: she may not love me."

"Not love you, the noble Earl Sutton, my son!"

"Mamma dear, be calm: happiness, not pride, is my object. I will never marry Lady Lucy."

"Then Merton will be lost, and the house of Sutton disgraced!"

"Never, no, never! Melton's agent I have lately seen; and papers are signed which will enable us to meet his demands."

"But why not have told me of this before?"

"I did not wish to trouble you on the subject; knowing that by so doing you would make it an opportunity for again introducing the name of Lady Lucy to me."

"You shall have your own way, Frederick; but, whatever may happen, never be so unkind as to reproach your mother. I am glad, however, that Melton's agent has been here, and that thus far all is well."

"I cannot say that all is well thus far, as I have to inform you that the Mr. Melton who has lately been staying at the Vicarage, and with whom Harry Whitworth is now, is no other than the nephew of the man who holds the mortgage deed of this estate!"

"You astonish me! But I thought you knew this young Mr. Melton?"

"Yes; but only as a college chum."

"Does he know anything of the mortgage?"

"Nothing: at least so the agent informed me."

"And where is Mr. Melton now—Mr. Norris Melton, I mean?"

"At Edinburgh."

"And his nephew and young Mr. Whitworth are with him, I suppose?"

"Exactly so; and you may depend that this young Melton will aid Harry in his endeavour to secure Miss Copewell, whose conduct to me is quite incomprehensible. In nothing important will she answer me!"

"I cannot hear more, Frederick; I will talk to you another time," said the Countess, and then left the room.

CHAPTER IX.

My uncle signified to us his intention of returning to London, and desired that we should be in readiness. The communication was not unexpected, as we had been in Scotland nearly a month. It was not given, however, until we had returned to Edinburgh, in which city we were to stay but two days after that on which we returned to it.

"Well, Harry," said I to my friend, after we had bid my sister and my uncle good night, "but two days remain for us to be here; and my grand question and your grand question must be settled before we get our tickets for Walton, or I do not know when they will."

"I am too well aware of it, Melton; but shall continue to hope and try for the best. Without your uncle's consent, I could not of course correspond with nor see your sister, dear as she is to me. All that you can do for me I shall be glad to receive, proud to acknowledge. But when, my dear fellow, do you propose to make matters known to him?"

"To night, Harry."

"That is good! and most sincerely do I hope that you—that I, may be successful."

"But, my dear fellow, let us not be seen to repine: I know that my uncle will be surprised, and, I sometimes fear, altogether opposed to our best wishes. True, my position is somewhat different to your own, as a positive engagement does now

I need say but little of the animal passion of love: I have read somewhere, however, that "people love because they cannot help it," and if so, hence the imperative necessity of marriage. Love between the sexes is a natural condition; but without esteem, benevolence, or pure affection, its object would be identified with principles in which selfishness and depravity predominate. I have heard "preachers" rant against the animal passion of love as if it were an evil in the human family: Would they not have been as wise if they had ranted also against eating and drinking, and denounced both practices as evil? Rather should they say, "Govern your passions; live soberly; love not that which is evil." Cant from the pulpit falls upon my ear with worse effect than an astounding lie. Ask any sensible and true father if he be ashamed to own the "olive branches" which surround his table! Ask any fond and wise mother to disown her first-born! It is no shame to love; but see that your love be not evil. Do not be angry with me for this little bit of quiet reasoning, you who affect to "shy" at the sight of a lady's ancle, or I shall, perhaps, tell you that you are more of the animal than the man, and that neither your craft nor your calling shall disguise the fact. I am inclined, indeed, not to spare you now, for you are of that sort which would rather beg than work, rather sneak in at the back door than boldly knock at the front.

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senator. As to the nobleness of her disposition, purity of nature, and personal charms, to these I had voted him insensible. Indeed, I am certain that until meeting my sister he had never felt the power of true love. We know that Miss Copewell's affection for him was great; and I am bound to say, that well would it be for every woman could she but show the same amount of moral courage as was shown by her. "Man proposes, God disposes." Providence is oftener working for us than we are for ourselves.

CHAPTER X.

We left Edinburgh early in the morning by an express train. At Carlisle we took refreshment, and again at Stafford. The bustle of station life is not without its advantages to travellers; and if one has a large circle of acquaintance, he is almost sure to fall in with one or more of them at every important railway station he happens to stop. The face of an old school-fellow, to wit, is often recognised "on the rail." Friendships have been made at Eton, Oxford, Cambridge, and other celebrated places of learning, which will not be forgotten while history lasts. School days have glorious memories for all brave and true hearts. It is possible, however, "on the line," to fall in with an acquaintance whose presence may turn out to be anything but agreeable, as frequent travellers must have experienced. A meeting at a railway station, therefore, may be productive of good or evil. Birmingham was the next place at which we left our carriage, and then it was for one on another line. The Great Western first-class express travelling is not very fatiguing; so that on arriving at that smoky residence of art-workmen, gun-makers, sword-makers, glass, brass, and iron grinders, twisters, turners, and polishers, we did not feel so much "upset" as if we had been packed in a third class carriage with about eighty other passengers, or as if we had been "very near smashed" by running into another train. No; we were all right—at least I was.

We were now upon the "up" platform, had taken our tickets, and *ourselves* looking after our luggage, which was duly deposited in a "box" adjoining the carriage in which we were soon to take our seats.

"Take your seats, gentlemen, take your seats for Walton, Oxford, Reading, and London!" was now shouted by the guard, as he, with whistle and key in hand, eyed every thing and every body standing near the train.

We obeyed the command. "Take your seats, gentlemen!" was again the cry, to which was added the well known shout—"Any more passengers for London, Windsor, Banbury, Walton, or Leamington?"

The guard now looked at his watch; there were but two minutes and we should be off—off to Walton!

"By your leave, here; make way, if you please, gentlemen!" cried a stout porter, as he brought up and pitched down close before our carriage the luggage of some other traveller "going on:" "By your leave!" and more luggage was pitched down. A man in livery now came up quickly, looked at the luggage, and then hurried off elsewhere.

I observed nothing more of what was going on outside till the guard suddenly opened the door of our carriage and called out "Room here, my Lord!" when, to my great surprise, the Countess of Merton, with her son, Lord Sutton, were handed into the very same compartment.

"Strange, very! most singular circumstance!" and so on, escaped the lips of Lord Sutton, on recognising us: for a moment we were all surprised and a little perplexed.

The meeting was unexpected. My sister had only heard of Lord Sutton; now she saw him—he saw her; both looked—my sister blushed. Neither the Countess nor Lord Sutton, however, were as

The Countess, his mother, had opposed the idea, but was giving way to her son's not unreasonable argument. At any moment his lordship could have married a woman with greater wealth; but, disliking her, he would not.

All honour to the noble lord! He had a heart, a mind; could love, wished to love, and would love, but only such as was, according to his taste and feeling, worth loving. Of his taste and feeling I have elsewhere spoken: Lord Sutton was a true nobleman, and distinguished by many of those admirable qualities which are peculiar only to those who have lofty intellects, and generous and wise dispositions. He had come of a stock, too, that had risen to honour and greatness by every noble and good endeavour possible to man, and well did he maintain that honour and greatness. By his mother, the Countess, he was dearly loved and prized.

Unfortunately, the domain of Merton was heavily mortgaged, and consequently a source of much trouble and annoyance to him. The Countess was well aware of this, yet was she against his marrying any but a titled lady, however beautiful, and good, and rich she might be. Now, Lord Sutton, although a dutiful son, had determined to marry from choice, not by recommendation, or solely for money. Happiness, not pride, was his object; and he was thinking how he could best secure that object when I spoke of him as sitting in his study. Near him was a favourite terrier, which, upon hearing footsteps, barked, and then ran to the now opened door to welcome the Countess, who had come to enquire of her son the cause of his remaining alone so long.

"Frederick, my dear boy," cried Lady Sutton, upon entering the study, "why are you here so long?"

"So long, mamma, have I been here long?"

"Lady Lucy says two hours, and thinks that you must have fallen asleep."

"Lady Lucy! Oh, how I hate that name!"

"But, my child, do you—"

"No! mother dear, I will not hear anything about Lady Lucy, or her wealth either. You will pardon me for what I have said, but I would rather lose Merton Hall than marry Lady Lucy. If all be well, I will marry Miss Copewell: you admire her, I love her. But I know not yet that I can secure her hand: she may not love me."

"Not love you, the noble Earl Sutton, my son!"

"Mamma dear, be calm: happiness, not pride, is my object. I will never marry Lady Lucy."

"Then Merton will be lost, and the house of Sutton disgraced!"

"Never, no, never! Melton's agent I have lately seen; and papers are signed which will enable us to meet his demands."

"But why not have told me of this before?"

"I did not wish to trouble you on the subject; knowing that by so doing you would make it an opportunity for again introducing the name of Lady Lucy to me."

"You shall have your own way, Frederick; but, whatever may happen, never be so unkind as to reproach your mother. I am glad, however, that Melton's agent has been here, and that thus far all is well."

"I cannot say that all is well thus far, as I have to inform you that the Mr. Melton who has lately been staying at the Vicarage, and with whom Harry Whitworth is now, is no other than the nephew of the man who holds the mortgage deed of this estate!"

"You astonish me! But I thought you knew this young Mr. Melton?"

The sound of a bell was heard, and "Walton, Walton!" was shouted by more than one voice as our train stopped. We were soon upon the platform, where the good Vicar of Walton hailed our presence with unmistakeable signs of pleasure and pride. I introduced my sister and my uncle to him, and was rejoiced to witness a meeting in which true cordiality was manifested on both sides. The Vicar was informed that my sister would stay with my uncle at Merton Hall till the morning, when they would be happy to call at the Vicarage, preparatory to their return to town, where they hoped to arrive the following evening. A great shaking of hands followed a statement from the Vicar to the effect that he would be prepared and most happy to see my sister and uncle at the Vicarage at any time they would call, after which many good nights were uttered, and away went the stately carriage of Lord Sutton, and with it the heart which my friend Harry was destined never to possess, although he knew it not.

The Vicar's carriage waited to convey us to the Vicarage, the old hunter's place being occupied on this occasion by the two greys.

"Here we are," said I, as we entered the porch; "let me go forward to meet Miss Whitworth, for I see her in the hall!" We met, and oh, how happy was that meeting! she was rich in beauty, beautiful in modesty. She looked upon her brother enquiringly, and asked him many questions. She saw he was not the same brother that he was, and wondered why. He looked upon her and spoke to her as he had never done before. He was thinner, too, than when he left Walton. There was no romance or nonsense about him, but a thoughtful, pensive air. Yes; he was changed, and, happily, for the better. He liked not the unexpected meeting of Lord Sutton, however, inasmuch as he had

CHAPTER IX.

My uncle signified to us his intention of returning to London, and desired that we should be in readiness. The communication was not unexpected, as we had been in Scotland nearly a month. It was not given, however, until we had returned to Edinburgh, in which city we were to stay but two days after that on which we returned to it.

"Well, Harry," said I to my friend, after we had bid my sister and my uncle good night, "but two days remain for us to be here; and my grand question and your grand question must be settled before we get our tickets for Walton, or I do not know when they will."

"I am too well aware of it, Melton; but shall continue to hope and try for the best. Without your uncle's consent, I could not of course correspond with nor see your sister, dear as she is to me. All that you can do for me I shall be glad to receive, proud to acknowledge. But when, my dear fellow, do you propose to make matters known to him?"

"To night, Harry."

"That is good! and most sincerely do I hope that you—that I, may be successful."

"But, my dear fellow, let us not be seen to repine: I know that my uncle will be surprised, and, I sometimes fear, altogether opposed to our best wishes. True, my position is somewhat different to your own, as a positive engagement does now

or later, General Brent would hear all that I considered proper or necessary for him to know, yet not till time should further develope the fate of my friend Harry, about whom he was extremely anxious. Into what a labyrinth of troubles false ambition, pride, and love of money have thrown, aye, is now throwing, many who might otherwise be prosperous and happy by just and honourable endeavours! Indeed, who can be truly prosperous and happy unless he does his duty to himself and others!

But here comes the carriage of Lord Sutton! No need of footmen, his lordship hands Miss Melton out himself, and conducts her and my uncle to the porch of the Vicarage, where they are met by the Vicar, and introduced to his lady and daughter and to General Brent. My uncle and my sister were delighted—all were but Harry, and he was jealous, jealous of Lord Sutton. General Brent was about to leave; but "no, General, no, not on any account!" was uttered by the good Vicar, and enforced by my no less good uncle, who was, to my great joy, "making himself at home." Lord Sutton's carriage again appears: Lord Sutton, my sister, and uncle, are gone—his lordship to Merton Hall, my uncle and my sister to the railway station. Much had been arranged, much settled in that short time. My uncle would expect me to join him in a week, and I gave him my promise. A week with my beloved was soon gone, and we were now divided by some ninety geographical miles, but united and happy in heart. I was in London.

CHAPTER XI.

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"My dear uncle, Miss Whitworth is the best of women; she is indeed very beautiful and good. Besides, she is not, as you think, poor, but highly respectable, and worthy as the best of the Meltons: and where is there a man more exalted in mind than the Vicar of Walton? Oh, uncle, your love of gold and titles is unworthy of your otherwise noble and good nature! if you think I am ungrateful, pray think so no longer. But to hear you, you who have been so good to us, who have watched over us, and brought us to our present healthful and happy state —to hear you, I say, oppose me in the object that is dearest to my heart—my life—is most painful. My dear uncle, you do not know the Whitworths. To me they have been most kind. Oh, sir, Miss Whitworth is faultless! not for worlds would I have her know that my good uncle thought less of her than he does of myself. That you may judge the character and disposition of her father, let me beg of you to read this, his last letter to me."

"To what purpose, William, to what purpose?"

"Then allow me to do so; I much wish to remove from your mind any unjust thoughts you may have towards a man you have not the honour of knowing, and—"

"I will read, sir, I will read it, as matters have gone so far as they have; so please to hand it to me?"

"My uncle read the letter; and, after one short pause, caught me by the hand, saying, at the same time—"We will take tickets for Walton to-morrow, that I may see and understand for myself. Your sister will go on to London. I will send a telegram to Lord Sutton to meet me at Merton Hall, as I have business with his lordship. While there, you can announce the fact to the Rev. Mr. Whitworth, that I may make his acquaintance. Nothing more will I hear, not one word," and my uncle at once

arms, and, by the help of his sister, placed her in a chair. Not an eye was tearless in that group. Well may the working of the human passions be compared to the upheaving billows of the mighty deep! Harry stood motionless by her side for a moment or two, not knowing how to act, or what to say. Was Miss Copewell alarmed, pained, or pleased? Harry had yet to learn. Miss Whitworth was kneeling by her, and rendering her all the attention possible. If my friend was never in a "fix" before, he was undoubtedly in one now, and he knew it. With her head resting upon Miss Whitworth's shoulder, pale, and scarcely breathing, Miss Copewell was causing considerable alarm to her fair supporter, yet Harry spoke not. Was she fainting? no; but after many heavy sighs and sobs, which she could not suppress, tears gushed from her eyes as tears had never done before, and then Harry spoke; but it was of himself, of his conduct; and again would he have sought Miss Copewell's forgiveness, but he feared to address her, feared to remind her of the past. Agony was his remorse. Miss Copewell was recovering, she had found relief in tears. Never was Harry so serious, never so fully aware of the necessity of being honorable. Miss Copewell would go home now, being better, and she was already leaving her chair, when Harry, grateful that nothing more serious had happened, begged that, before leaving, she would tell him if he was forgiven? But Miss Whitworth gently forbade him saying more, pleading as an excuse the lateness of the hour.

"Then," said Harry, addressing his sister, "permit me to bid her farewell, for to-morrow I will leave Walton for ever!"

"My dear brother, why is all this strange conduct: do you not know that Miss Copewell loves you?"

senator. As to the nobleness of her disposition, purity of nature, and personal charms, to these I had voted him insensible. Indeed, I am certain that until meeting my sister he had never felt the power of true love. We know that Miss Copewell's affection for him was great; and I am bound to say, that well would it be for every woman could she but show the same amount of moral courage as was shown by her. "Man proposes, God disposes." Providence is oftener working for us than we are for ourselves.

his utter astonishment, beheld his son. "My son, my son," cried he, "I thought you were in Leamington: How long have you been here?"

"I came by the last train, my dear father; but walked up, thinking it would do me good."

"Well, well, I am glad you are safe, and especially glad to see you, as I hope, upon friendly terms with our dear Miss Copewell: Is it so?"

"God grant that it may be, sir, if it is otherwise now; for never until this night did I appreciate her even as a friend. But, my dear father, my conduct to Miss Copewell before leaving here with Mr. Melton was most unjust and cruel; and to you, as I have to her, must I confess my sincere regret. Miss Copewell has forgiven me, sir; and, with your permission, I beg to be allowed to accompany her home?"

"May Heaven bless you both is all I can say, and so good night."

The Vicar was surprised to see his son in the drawing-room with Miss Copewell; but wise enough, in the absence of any knowledge of what had taken place, to retire.

After affectionately embracing Miss Whitworth, Miss Copewell permitted Harry to accompany her home, sending the servant who had come for her forward. Harry entered Walton Lodge, and was received in the kindest possible manner by Mrs. Copewell. The doctor had long gone to his solitary bed, and therefore knew nothing of what was going on. The kindness, yea, more, affection which Harry received from Mrs. Copewell had an almost overpowering effect upon him: he was receiving kindness, not contempt; forgiveness, not revenge. Late as was the hour, my friend was requested by Mrs Copewell not to return home for half-an-hour; he did not stay so long, however, yet he spent enough time with her daughter to prove

beyond all doubt that he loved her, passionately and well. He would have told her all; but his heart was too full; so with one long and loving embrace he bade her "good night," and not as he had once thought of doing, "farewell." Now, and until now only, was Harry out of his "fix." How glad, how rejoiced should I have appeared, had I but have been near him when this great, this important conquest of the heart was accomplished! To him it was everything: life, happiness, all depended upon it.

Returning home, Harry found that all had retired to rest but his sister, who would see him first, and know how he had been received by Mrs Copewell. Harry made a full confession to her; told her of his former intentions, had he but succeeded in marrying Miss Copewell; of his falling in love with Miss Melton; of his discussions with myself; of the sufferings he had endured; of what he hoped and feared; of his former rival, Lord Sutton; what he had heard at Leamington; of, in short, all that had occurred to him since leaving college, but more especially dating his remarks from the time when he first conceived the idea of marrying Miss Copewell for her money, in order that he might effectually accomplish the objects which he had in view. Wearied with a succession of events to which both had hitherto been strangers, they too retired to rest, when the old Vicarage assumed its usual nightly quietude.

It is unnecessary to record much of what was said by the people of the village of Walton upon what had taken place in the families to which the reader has been introduced, or fully to enter into the nature of every important circumstance which occurred at this particular stage of their history. In the best of "well regulated families" there are sure to be secrets which should be kept secret; therefore, without any unnecessary delay, reference will

yet aware that a Miss Melton existed—at least of the existence of the one whom I have ever been proud to call sister. But whether so or not, Lord Sutton seemed most anxious to "catch her eye," and was more absorbed in contemplating her features than those of any one else. No introduction had taken place: it had not occurred to my uncle that his niece was unknown to the Countess and her son, nor did I venture to take upon myself the responsibility of making them acquainted with each other, especially after what my uncle had said to me during our private interview. But that she was of our party must have been evident to the Countess and his Lordship immediately after they had entered the carriage. As is usual between parties when nothing particular can well be talked about, reference was made by my uncle to the "weather;" in reply to which, Lord Sutton said that he felt quite charmed by it. Now the weather is by no means an unimportant subject to talk about, as it necessarily affects one's health, the crops, farming, trade, commerce, and all external occupations, whether of business or pleasure; therefore, like everything else in which one's interests are concerned, it may not be amiss at such times to appear "weather-wise."

Lord Sutton was very free and affable. My sister was supposed to be reading, but I could see that she was not. The presence of Lord Sutton affected her—was affecting her more and more. "Surely," thought I, "my uncle cannot possibly wish his niece to remain unknown to the Countess and Lord Sutton!" but I at once set aside all doubt upon the question by placing them upon speaking terms. Each was gratified—Lord Sutton delighted—my friend Harry thoughtful. Had he found a fancied rival?

We now see what changes, what wonders, what

joys and sorrows may come even in one single month! Well has it been said, "Truth is stranger than fiction!"

When the telegram reached Merton Hall by which was made known the intention of Mr. Norris Melton to visit Lord Sutton there, that nobleman was many miles away; the "wires" were again acted upon, and hence we found his lordship at Birmingham, placed by accident in the same compartment of the railway carriage as ourselves. The meeting was most singular, and the issue important.

"But, sir," said Lord Sutton to my uncle, when informed that my sister was going on to London, "but, sir, you cannot intend Miss Melton to travel alone to town; why not permit us the honour of entertaining her with you. I am sure we can make her comfortable, and must beg of you to allow us to do so."

Every eye was upon my uncle—his answer anxiously expected. But before he could reply the Countess had kindly taken my sister's hand, and, now looking at her, now at him, declared very emphatically but most courteously that she should indeed be pleased to take charge of her for any period of time my uncle could spare her; she was sure she would be very happy at the Hall; and if not, they would go elsewhere.

It is needless to add that so kind and pressing an invitation was accepted; but my uncle, in acceding to the request, stated that on the present occasion it would be necessary for his niece to leave with him on the morrow for town, where they had to prepare for engagements previously arranged. No objection being offered, time only was necessary to enable my sister's newly-found friends to prove the sincerity or otherwise of the remarks which they had been pleased to make.

I had believed, and yet continued to believe, that my sister loved my friend Harry. Indeed, I wonder not that she should have felt pleasure in listening to and looking at a man whose language and appearance a more beautiful and more talented woman than she might have considered herself honored in receiving "attentions" from, however similar those attentions might be to such as lovers are wont to pay to the fair damsels whom they would make their brides. Still, there may have been causes why she herself should have preferred Lord Sutton rather than my friend, even though he had been merely a Frederick Sutton, and not Frederick Earl Sutton. One must admit that taste or fancy is not always to be understood even by those who have it largely developed, nor would one always be justified in attempting to discover and analyze the private feelings or fancies of one's friends or relatives. Nevertheless, one is morally bound to enquire into causes which operate against the interests of society, however painful the method of doing so may be. Neither persons, nor communities, nor nations are safe, never happy nor prosperous, unless they have confidence in and respect each other. Confidence inspires respect. But to our tale. It was true then that my sister, whatever may have been the extent of her affection for my friend Harry, no longer thought of him as he once fondly hoped she would, but, influenced by my uncle on the one hand, and by Lord Sutton on the other, accepted in earnest an offer of marriage from that nobleman, and without my knowledge or consent, as neither the one nor the other had ever hinted to me the slightest idea of what had occurred between them. To say the least of it, I was annoyed; but, upon questioning my uncle, was summarily assured this wise:—

"William, I have given you my consent to marry the Vicar of Walton's daughter, but I would never

carried off to Merton Hall the object of his affections. Had she gone to London he would have cared less; Lord Sutton had been, and, he fancied, still was his rival. He believed his lordship had conceived a strong affection for my sister, nor could I persuade him otherwise. His altered, troubled appearance pained Miss Whitworth greatly. I, too, was grieved; for my friend, whom I almost loved, was yet in a "fix." For him, however, I had done my best.

I was now the recognized lover of Miss Whitworth, and was privileged with a private interview with her ere I retired to rest that night. We were happy.

* * * * *

The news of our having returned to Walton was spread over the fine old village as quickly as news is always spread by those who are ever upon the look out for gossip. We had breakfasted, and were taking a rambling walk in the Vicarage grounds previous to the time when my uncle and my sister would come down to see the Vicar and his family at home. General Brent was first to call upon us, and in many little ways showed that he felt a deep interest in the welfare of all. Upon the receipt of my last letter, the Vicar had, I learned, informed the General of the proposition I had made to him respecting his daughter, and the probability there was of an union between us some day. The Vicar was not unwise in making such a statement to the General, between whom there existed a friendly confidence which was dear to both. Secrecy was no longer necessary. The gallant General, however, had yet much to learn of what had taken place during our short absence: Harry's altered appearance and manner of address alone would have told him this, apart from anything which he was at liberty to conjecture as the result of my having taken him with me to Scotland. But, sooner

quired, were we but just to ourselves and others! It might not be amiss to remember that the burden of almost all the taxes a people pay is one which might be removed by the simple practice of common honesty, or by the fulfilment of that command which bids us do as we would be done by. Truly may one say, how unfortunate it is that the inhabitants of this beautiful world are so weak-minded, so ignorant, and so disunited as to require the rule of kings, priests, and task-masters! But so it is: the people will be ruled, not by themselves and for themselves, but by others, who make them their slaves. Hence the necessity of external law, the application of which will ever be oppressive, because we must pay our rulers; or, in other words, because we will not be honest and maintain the principle of self-government. But the summit or glory of human life is differently understood by different individuals, according to the knowledge each possesses of its essential objects. We know, however, that, with scarcely any knowledge at all, men find many objects of pleasure which, were it possible, they would delight in for ever. There is for instance the enjoyment of exquisite sensualism for those who care for and are rich enough to procure it, besides the thousands of greater and lesser objects from which men derive pleasure, even though they be ignorant of everything except the fact that they delight in them. Now, if man's position in this state be an ignorant one, and if all men are equal before God, how defective is the social and religious government to which they are responsible! Once more, let me most solemnly urge all men and women wisely to ennoble their own hearts and minds, trusting to none for any one thing which they can accomplish for themselves. By such a course, and such only, will the people know when the right man is in the right place; when to applaud,

CHAPTER XI.

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But, to his credit, he maintained no sullen or harsh words for the few who saw him in his fallen state, preferring always to show a dignified bearing, and to speak kindly. The latter period of his life was spent mostly in solitude, and often in sadness. Not long before his demise, my uncle was closeted with him, when he finally entrusted to his keeping papers which would one day expose the wickedness of an unjust steward, namely, the Mr. Penmore who now forms one of the characters in these pages.

Before entering upon a subject more pleasing than Mr. Penmore, I will briefly refer to the part which he took in connection with the development of some of the other characters, and then bid him and the thoughts which his name have suggested adieu.

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of the sincerity and devotedness of those who were the objects of that solemnity. Proceeding, therefore, with the solemnization until the giving of the "blessing" became necessary, the officiating minister admitted the bridegroom's father within the altar rails; and, raising his hands above the heads of the married pair, he most devoutly besought the benediction of Heaven upon them. Then followed the singing and playing of a beautiful and appropriate anthem, in which the voices of choristers and singing men told with that peculiar power and effect which can alone come from the sublime and holy music of the Church. Again the voice of the minister was heard, and with the saying of that great prayer, the Lord's prayer, the service was ended. Now was pealed forth from the organ strains of exulting, glorious, joyous music; and ere the bride and bridegroom had left the portals of the old church, the echos of the shrill sounding trumpets of that noble instrument bade all present go and rejoice with Christian joy, for the Church had united two of its loving members in the holy bonds of matrimony. And scarcely had the last sound of soul-stirring organ music departed, than fresh emotions were called forth by the ringing of the rich-toned and harmonious peal of bells belonging to that same old church; while on every side were smiles and good wishes from villagers who had assembled to witness the departure of the happy pair to their new home. Happy, blessed day, to my friend Harry and to Miss Copewell, was that upon which they were made husband and wife. But if they had not loved each other as did Isaac and Rebecca, how vain had been the pledges which they made before the altar of their God: how useless,—yea, more, how like a wanton pageant show had been their bridal procession: how like a song of blasphemy had been the anthem which

have sanctioned a proposition that his son should marry my niece. We need not discuss the question further. So far as I can see, I believe that all parties have every reason to be satisfied, as I am. I did not myself introduce your sister to Lord Sutton, nor is he the nobleman of whom I hinted something to you some time since."

"I thank you, sir, for what you have said; Lord Sutton is an estimable man, and I wish him and my sister every happiness."

Time unravels mysteries, I have heard: in some cases it may do so; but I apprehend that there are not a few, and great ones, too, which will never be known.

It is generally of consequence to the agents and stewards of noblemen that the latter should not be so poor as to make the places of the former scarcely worth holding, therefore, the reader must not be surprised to learn, that the confidential agent of Lord Sutton was ever on the alert to advance not only his master's interests, but more especially his own also. He was not a young man either, this Mr. Penmore; nor was he by profession a lawyer, although quite as learned and sharp in "the tricks of the law" as any man who practices its abusive as well as its necessary and legitimate functions. Law, however, is more of a friend than an enemy to society, as the transactions of some men unfortunately give frequent evidence to prove. It is a sad thing to reflect that there are so many people compelled to be honest through fear of consequences, rather than from principle or choice. As a rule, it were well to find out and study what one's duty is, and then to perform it with pleasure. Of course there are many duties; but, be they ever so many, the same principle should actuate one in the fulfilment or discharge of them all. How few lawyers and parsons and doctors would there be re-

quired, were we but just to ourselves and others! It might not be amiss to remember that the burden of almost all the taxes a people pay is one which might be removed by the simple practice of common honesty, or by the fulfilment of that command which bids us do as we would be done by. Truly may one say, how unfortunate it is that the inhabitants of this beautiful world are so weak-minded, so ignorant, and so disunited as to require the rule of kings, priests, and task-masters! But so it is: the people will be ruled, not by themselves and for themselves, but by others, who make them their slaves. Hence the necessity of external law, the application of which will ever be oppressive, because we must pay our rulers; or, in other words, because we will not be honest and maintain the principle of self-government. But the summit or glory of human life is differently understood by different individuals, according to the knowledge each possesses of its essential objects. We know, however, that, with scarcely any knowledge at all, men find many objects of pleasure which, were it possible, they would delight in for ever. There is for instance the enjoyment of exquisite sensualism for those who care for and are rich enough to procure it, besides the thousands of greater and lesser objects from which men derive pleasure, even though they be ignorant of everything except the fact that they delight in them. Now, if man's position in this state be an ignorant one, and if all men are equal before God, how defective is the social and religious government to which they are responsible! Once more, let me most solemnly urge all men and women wisely to ennoble their own hearts and minds, trusting to none for any one thing which they can accomplish for themselves. By such a course, and such only, will the people know when the right man is in the right place; when to applaud,

to me on earth. But, happy as was Miss Whitworth in life, so was she in death. Pure alike in heart and soul, the unknown world into which she felt her spirit would soon depart brought no fear, for her hope was fixed on Him who succours the Christian in life, and comforts him in death. Lovely even when all animation had long ceased to exist, I could but gaze upon her pale and chilled features in solemn sadness, awful woe. "Like Agnes of Merton," said I, "thou hast been cut down while in the flower of life; and like her, too, hast found a paradise in heaven. But, Mary, from me thou art gone; and since it is with the living that the living should dwell, and with the duties of life that they should be occupied, I will think of thee only as one who has gone to swell the number of those who sing angels' songs in the palace of our Redeemer, where, when my own soul shall leave its tabernacle, I hope to join thee. In death, then, but not for ever, I bid thee farewell, farewell."

But was there no hope left for me in this world? was it impossible for me to love another as well as I had loved her? was my destiny here to end with hers? Rather had she lived than that I should now have occasion to place questions like these before me, for I loved her truly, loved her only. But I loved again; and strengthening the power of my moral courage by a wise recollection of the experience of the past, I became again a happy companion, and with one of the happiest of women.

Whatever a man may have the happiness to possess which is lovely, valuable, or necessary to him, let him not forget that by death, accident, or other cause, it may suddenly be removed from him, and at once placed beyond recovery. It may seem difficult, indeed—it may be most painful for him to do so; nevertheless, placed as we are in the midst of dangers and uncertainties, it would be wise not

only to guard against them, but to be prepared to encounter and manfully to struggle against the evils which so often follow in their course. Serious reflections upon the contingencies of life ought occasionally to occupy the mind of every individual who would properly regard the real welfare of his own interests. But how vast is the number who fail to perform this great personal duty. Personal duty! It is more—it is a duty in which humanity is concerned, a duty which, if neglected, draws forth pity rather than sympathy, augments sorrow rather than wholesome reflection. If you would weep, let it be in solitude, and rather over your own follies and sins, than for a loss which no power will or can restore to you. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary suffering on your own part, and to spare the feelings of those around you, so live that your actions and words may be acceptable to the world, and pleasing to yourself.

With much earnestness, and in the solemnity of holy truth, would I urge the rising generation to have a just regard for all that is essential to health and happiness. But, without education, useful labour, and a mind free from morbid elements, how ill-adapted man is to comprehend and effect the great objects for which he was created! Wait not for some hoped-for instructor, some friend whom you expect to guide you into the arms of fortune, O ye who will not govern yourselves; but be your own improvers, your own wise counsellors, the seekers and makers of your own fortunes, your own earthly and eternal welfare. But you must work, merit the confidence and esteem of your neighbours, be courteous, just, sympathizing, forgiving, charitable. What sight is there more deplorable than that of a man, noble perhaps in appearance, and with a generous heart, yet who, at the same time, is a living monument of ignorance and comparative uselessness? Would you do

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filled their hearts with gratitude, and peace, and joy. But, as we have seen, they were equally yoked; their love was a Christian love; therefore, whatever troubles, and losses, and afflictions might come upon them, they could comfort each other in all confidence and hope, "according to God's holy ordinance."

But not only was Harry's wedding day a joyous one to him and his fair bride; indeed, without an exception, all who honored them by their presence upon that occasion seemed happy. As to General Brent, never did I see him so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of excellent Christian companionship as then; while my uncle, with infinite joy, was unmistakeably winning to himself the heart of his most lady-like and kind-hearted sister. "Truly," said I to the General, "my visit to Walton has been productive of such a variety of happy results, that I shall for ever remember it as the most important and most gratifying event of my life.

The Vicarage seemed dull without my friend Harry, and the absence of his bride from Walton Lodge proved to her parents how cheering to them her presence had been. The time had come, however, when, as husband and wife, it was necessary for them to have a home of their own, and when, too, they had interests and objects to pursue and maintain regarding which their own individual taste and judgment would be found most pleasing if left to develope itself unaided by the advice of friends, whether relatives or not.

As I had anticipated, my uncle's tender addresses to Miss Brent were fully appreciated by that lady, whom he ultimately married, and under the happiest circumstances.

General Brent remained unmarried, but was still the much admired, intelligent, and amusing friend of all who had the honour of being known to him.

But, alas! for myself, after all my fond hopes, desires, and objects—for myself, I say, was disappointment, sorrow, and intense anguish. I—I who had pictured to myself a life of happiness, a life of joy with her I had loved so well, was suddenly compelled to relinquish those hopes, those desires, and those objects which she had made dear to me as my life; for, alas! she was no more. Lonely indeed without her presence and happy smile was now the home where I first beheld her; in vain did I look for her; in vain did I listen to the sound of coming footsteps, for her spirit had fled, and her once fair form was now but perishing, unseemly matter. Yet how hard was it for me to believe her incapable of hearing, unable to speak to me, in truth how hard was it to believe her lost, or, in other words, to believe her dead to me for ever. "Mary, Mary," I cried; but the only response to my passionate cry was the dying echo of my own words, and which seemed to say, "Gone, gone, farewell." Alas, alas! how true is it that the fairest, the noblest, and the greatest of earthly mortals are sometimes claimed by the monster death, even when admiring friends had believed they would be happy and enduring, and when they themselves had expected to receive the joy of their sweetest hopes, or of that which would come from their most glorious achievements. What wonder was it, then, that I, who had dared all but Heaven, should have felt as one who was wrecked alone on a distant and solitary rock, or that like him I should have felt lonely, sad, and, in my moments of terrible fear, hopeless? I had seen my sister united in marriage to Lord Sutton, my friend Harry to Miss Copewell, my uncle to Miss Brent, while I, who had hoped most, was bereft of the treasure which was dearest to me, and at a time when I valued it beyond all which was lovely, pleasing, and necessary

to me on earth. But, happy as was Miss Whitworth in life, so was she in death. Pure alike in heart and soul, the unknown world into which she felt her spirit would soon depart brought no fear, for her hope was fixed on Him who succours the Christian in life, and comforts him in death. Lovely even when all animation had long ceased to exist, I could but gaze upon her pale and chilled features in solemn sadness, awful woe. "Like Agnes of Merton," said I, "thou hast been cut down while in the flower of life; and like her, too, hast found a paradise in heaven. But, Mary, from me thou art gone; and since it is with the living that the living should dwell, and with the duties of life that they should be occupied, I will think of thee only as one who has gone to swell the number of those who sing angels' songs in the palace of our Redeemer, where, when my own soul shall leave its tabernacle, I hope to join thee. In death, then, but not for ever, I bid thee farewell, farewell."

But was there no hope left for me in this world? was it impossible for me to love another as well as I had loved her? was my destiny here to end with hers? Rather had she lived than that I should now have occasion to place questions like these before me, for I loved her truly, loved her only. But I loved again; and strengthening the power of my moral courage by a wise recollection of the experience of the past, I became again a happy companion, and with one of the happiest of women.

Whatever a man may have the happiness to possess which is lovely, valuable, or necessary to him, let him not forget that by death, accident, or other cause, it may suddenly be removed from him, and at once placed beyond recovery. It may seem difficult, indeed—it may be most painful for him to do so; nevertheless, placed as we are in the midst of dangers and uncertainties, it would be wise not

only to guard against them, but to be prepared to encounter and manfully to struggle against the evils which so often follow in their course. Serious reflections upon the contingencies of life ought occasionally to occupy the mind of every individual who would properly regard the real welfare of his own interests. But how vast is the number who fail to perform this great personal duty. Personal duty! It is more—it is a duty in which humanity is concerned, a duty which, if neglected, draws forth pity rather than sympathy, augments sorrow rather than wholesome reflection. If you would weep, let it be in solitude, and rather over your own follies and sins, than for a loss which no power will or can restore to you. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary suffering on your own part, and to spare the feelings of those around you, so live that your actions and words may be acceptable to the world, and pleasing to yourself.

With much earnestness, and in the solemnity of holy truth, would I urge the rising generation to have a just regard for all that is essential to health and happiness. But, without education, useful labour, and a mind free from morbid elements, how ill-adapted man is to comprehend and effect the great objects for which he was created! Wait not for some hoped-for instructor, some friend whom you expect to guide you into the arms of fortune, O ye who will not govern yourselves; but be your own improvers, your own wise counsellors, the seekers and makers of your own fortunes, your own earthly and eternal welfare. But you must work, merit the confidence and esteem of your neighbours, be courteous, just, sympathizing, forgiving, charitable. What sight is there more deplorable than that of a man, noble perhaps in appearance, and with a generous heart, yet who, at the same time, is a living monument of ignorance and comparative uselessness? Would you do

your duty to your fellow? then cast off pride of birth and station, apathy and selfishness, and help him to become wise in his day and generation. There is a happiness in doing good which is sweeter than the choicest fruits, while the memory of it will never decay.

Was it merely to eat and to drink, to walk this earth as votaries of fashion, to cloud the brain and darken the vision by sensual habits, to live a life of unholy excitement and pleasure, and to scoff at reason, honour, and virtue, that we were called into being? Surely not; nor must we dare to censure any but man for the position in which he is found. Man makes his own destiny. He sometimes blames woman, and tells her that it is she who brought him dishonour, miserable toil, and the other ills of wicked life; but, withont blaming either man or woman, it is certain that, as I have observed in my prefatory address, "As a man soweth, so shall he also reap."

* * * * *

Revisiting some of my old friends at Walton some time ago, and for the first time since I saw the mortal remains of my first love consigned to a resting place in the old churchyard there, I had the unexpected pleasure of finding that but few changes had taken place, none of which were of any great importance, except that Doctor Copewell with his wife had removed to another part of the country, having previously let Walton Lodge to two maiden ladies, sisters, of the name of Graham. Now the Misses Graham were not exactly what people would call "old maids," nor were they very young ones; but, whatever their age might have been when I was introduced to them, certain it is that they were highly intelligent, and exceedingly chatty and agreeable, although less so to each other than to their friends, especially when the latter happened to be —unmarried gentlemen. "Really," thought I,

upon seeing these ladies, "what a pity it is that marriageable people do not oftener meet." There are causes, of course, why they do not, and one cannot but believe that those causes may not only be traced, but likewise removed to a greater extent than some have imagined. Let me here observe, however, that I much like the idea of that "mamma" who said, "My daughter is now at a proper age to marry; and I hope that, as she is healthy, decent looking, properly educated, and industrious, she will meet with a suitable partner, or remain without one." Just so; and it was because the Misses Graham had not met with suitable partners that I found them unmarried. Wise maidens were the Misses Graham, but not quite happy; good looking, too, they were, respectable, and "moderately well to do." What a pity they had not mixed more largely in society! what a shame it was that their brother had not more frequently visited them, and have brought down with him a friend or two occasionally! Tut! what did he care about sisters? He had enough to do to look after himself, without "bothering" with them!

Now, seriously, was not that brother a most unkind, undutiful, and selfish brother? Surely he was; and it is much to be regretted that brothers do not more frequently advance the general interests of their sisters than they do, and likewise oftener throw around them the arm of protection.

But a word or two here upon the advantages of social intercourse between the sexes. There is nothing much more necessary to health and happiness than good companionship: I do not mean such as exists in the cloister, the club, the common-room, or in Bacchanalian saloons, billiard and smoke-rooms; but that which is formed by the bringing together of young men and young women for purposes of mutual enjoyment and improve-

ment. No young man, I must observe, can be properly educated unless he takes as one of his "schools" the society of intelligent and respectable unmarried women; and, as a matter of course, if he conducts himself creditably in this school, he confers a boon upon them, and comes before the world not only as a man of honour, but as one having judgment, refined taste, and the manner and bearing of a true gentleman. And as there are so very many natural and good facilities to render a greater social intercourse of the sexes practicable, and by the adoption of which society generally would become more elevated, united, and healthy, it would seem that there must be some very egregious and contaminating evil or series of evils around us to cause so many young people to prefer, openly, and in the face of reason and consequences, demoralizing pleasures to those which are at once lawful, rational, delightful, and sufficient for the best of us. The force of example is all-powerful in this precocious age, so that if he who would be thought a man speaks or acts unbecomingly, let him be told that his conduct is not only injurious to himself, but also to those around him. A man has no more right to set before the world a bad precedent than he has to stab his brother to the heart. There cannot be any doubt but that all immoralities are crimes; and much as men may enjoy unseemly conversation and pernicious habits, both are crimes, and society must of necessity suffer through them. You may admire the art-productions or skill of a man, but you cannot respect him if he is immoral, or if given to habits by which society is injured. If a man would be respected by society he must first respect himself.

But our social system is in some respects a very curse to multitudes of the women of this country, while heartless, hollow, and vacillating fashion

carry giddy crowds into extravagance and inevitable ruin.

We now come to the grand question touching much of what has been said in "The Old Parish Church," and that is—How are we, the inhabitants of a free country, to become more happy and prosperous? I reply; By aiding one another in finding out and doing our duty to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. And I may further observe, that, if a man reasonably does his best to fulfil these duties, he will rarely feel the want of occupation and happiness, while by common industry, frugality, and temperance, he prolongs his life, and fears neither the evils of poverty, nor the terrors of an unknown world.

Before, however, we as a community can be either more happy or prosperous, the social position of young women must be greatly improved, and in many important respects. Why, let me ask, are they not allowed to have sufficient proper recreation, and at all seasons? Why are they expected to "look so very shy," when, as all the world should know, a little good hearty laughing instead would do them and the "men folk" a thousand times more good. Women should not be educated to look what they are not, but to fulfil those duties for which they are adapted. And if this were more often the case, they would have stouter hearts, and more moral courage to defend themselves against their own weaknesses, and also those of men. Plainly speaking, the ignorance of the ways of life in many women, together with their helplessness in other respects, places them too much at the mercy of men, who, from various selfish and unmanly causes, are frequently not unwilling to make them their dupes. Either let women work, as men do, at profitable labour, or so construct the constitution and institutions of the nation that all

who may choose to marry could do so. The greatest wrongs of women must be attributed, as I have elsewhere mentioned, to the cupidity of men. There cannot be a doubt, however, but that the long-skirted, half-veiled affectation of many of the women of this day is not modesty, but mostly flaunting vulgarity, and part of the substitute which takes the place of proper education, true dignity of character, and useful occupation. As well might one believe a person religious because he wears the garb of a religious order, as to imagine that true womanly modesty and respectability of character are indited by the disposition of her dress.

As formed and endowed by her Creator, woman is quite comparable to man; and as he is a dependant upon her for happiness as she is upon him, let it be the object of each to be just to the other, both fulfilling those duties which will bring mutual love, mutual comfort, and mutual prosperity. But, if I could, I would, under present circumstances, persuade many women to hope less from men, and to look upon themselves as destined to become their own supporters, and by means of some suitable employment by which they could live as respectably as good citizens do. I admit that hope brings pleasure, and it is but natural that every maiden should hope for a husband; but, as this hope will but too often be a vain hope, and very hard for any woman to believe, I say that I would, were it possible, persuade many women to think but little of love, marriage, and so on, and thereby save unnecessary and vexing thoughts and disappointments. For if, from various causes, great numbers of women cannot obtain husbands, how much better for the less fortunate of them would it be did they but prepare to live singly. England is a free trade country, and I must advise the "ladies" to compete with the "gentlemen" in the race they run for

wealth by means of industry. We know that the will of the Creator concerning the sexes is perverted by the conventionalities of life, and that very many men plead "poverty" as a cause for not marrying; we know, also, that others are too mean, or, from various other causes, mostly of an ignoble nature, they are indifferent about the society of woman at all, except for an occasional "spree," or for purposes which are far more dishonorable.

But let us return to our newly-made acquaintances, the Misses Graham, and to our old village of Walton, and see how the name of the Fellows of Oxford was received at Doctor Copewell's old residence upon the occasion previously mentioned.

The society of Walton and neighbourhood was decidedly good, and considerably above the average of country places, both in quantity and quality; and it is probable that the Misses Graham were thoroughly aware that such was the case, and hence preferred it as a place of residence.

I am not prepared to state the reason why, but ladies of all ages married or single, have a wonderful fancy for giving an interesting ear to the subject of marriage; indeed I might say to "Births, Marriages, and Deaths" generally. Now, I could not say that there is any harm in doing this, but, ahem!—Don't you think they display a little too much morbid sensibility in their fondness for tragedy? "What a number of ladies are caught reading murders!" I once heard a man about town observe. Happily, however, the Misses Graham had better taste, and could rattle on about So-and-so's wedding-day, and what became of it, as well as any body.

Well, to go on with our tale, it happened that these ladies showed more than ordinary inquisitiveness as to the reason why so many of the Fellows of Oxford remained unmarried. I gave the replies

which Oxford men usually give when questioned upon the subject, but so unsatisfactory were they that I felt as if I should get my ears well boxed if I made any further attempt to vindicate the cause of celibacy, either for the Fellows of Oxford or for fellows of any sort. Thus placed, I attempted to divert their attention from the Fellows of that ancient University to the beauty of its architecture, its magnificent groves, shady walks, and so on; but no, they would have something to say about its unmarried Fellows, and even went so far as to affirm that celibacy was an "accursed state," and therefore not in accordance with Christian principles and practices. I was now obliged to prepare for something like a debate; and after a few ahems, and sundry little coughs, came out as follows:—

"But," said I, addressing Miss Graham, "I believe that many of the Fellows of Oxford would rather remain unmarried!"

"Sir," said that lady, "you are only referring to the old Fellows, who live conventional lives, and not to the Fellows in general."

Long and loud laughter followed this sally, in which I heartily joined; still, not wishing to be outdone, I observed in reply—

"But some of those Fellows are not pecuniarily in a position to marry."

"Then I would do away with Fellowships altogether, and put the Fellows upon their own resources. Individual enterprise is the very essence of progression, because it is self dependent. The reputation of Oxford as a seat of learning does not depend upon the celibacy of its Fellows but upon its Tutors, whether married or single."

"Very true, very true," cried General Brent, who was one of the party; "and although I don't know much about Oxford, or its Fellows either, I can yet perfectly well understand that a married

man is more likely to be consistent in his teaching than one who shirks its domestic responsibilities, and runs the risk of dishonour."

"General, General," said I, "you are only a bachelor yourself; but I will excuse you, because I do not know how a soldier can marry, at least while he holds his commission."

"Sir," cried he, "I knew the time when I should and would have married; but, sir, duty, duty called me away, and now I don't care about marrying: a soldier is an unfortunate man, and perhaps a college Fellow is. I would to God that there were no need of soldiers; but, judging from what has been said, I see no need for unmarried Fellows in colleges."

"Well done, General," observed Miss Graham, "your view of the question is reasonable; and I hope that every facility will be given to every person, man or woman, who may choose to marry: I like to see people happy. By-the-bye, I have a letter by me from a decidedly clever and observing lady friend, upon the very question we are speaking of, and as it may afford us a little amusement, I will read a portion of it to you."

The letter being produced, Miss Graham read as follows:—

"There must be something in college life which the Fellows relish most amazingly—the secret of which, however, they are very chary about making known either to brother or sister. Once or twice in my life I have seen these good-looking Fellows running about the streets of ancient Oxford, as nimbly and business-like as one could best desire; but, for the life of me, I cannot understand why they should live shut up in rooms where the blessed sun-light of woman's face is barely allowed to shine for a few moments, and then only upon very rare and singular occasions. I may be wrong in my likes and dislikes, but I should certainly like to see

every one of these college Fellows leading as many fair daughters of Eve to the altar of matrimony, and afterwards to hear of their having families that would be a comfort and a blessing to them in their old age. I do not profess to a knowledge of the dead languages, but I must declare that, to the ladies, these Fellows are as so many dead men. If they had all taken the vow of celibacy—wore nasty long beards—had shaven crowns—and were accustomed to hide their forms in rough and greasy garments of a monkish pattern and colour—why, I say, I might be inclined to let them off, and to recommend the letting of their rooms to a more go-ahead set of men. Yet, bless you, there they are—save and except those of them whose kidneys are affected, or who are otherwise indisposed through having dipped too deeply into the mysteries of Durandus, and others who gloried in Iconology—yes, I say, there they are as lively as larks on the wing—well-dressed, too, as becometh them, and eye-glassing all the pretty girls who happen to come within their range, and so on: but, as to their popping the question—why, to tell you the truth, I should as soon expect them to renounce the thirty-nine articles.

"After all that has been or can be said in favour of Gothic colleges, good living, and quiet—after all, I say, how awfully insipid is a Fellow's life in college without the presence of woman! But, it may be said, they cannot all marry and enjoy the benefits of their Fellowships too! To which I reply, Let the cruel deed which stands in the way of their emancipation be revoked, and let them come forth like free men, and each, if so disposed, take unto himself a wife. Really and truly, I hate stumbling blocks of any sort; so I say, as every other woman will after me, that it's a shame to hinder the poor Fellows from marrying, for I know they cannot help loving some of the dear creatures who are wont to

grace their gardens and groves, and other delightful places, any more than the rest of the men who assemble there. For my part I like married men the best, as all they say and do seems more natural, confidential, and true, than otherwise—and, as I suppose, because they know the real obligations and necessities of life. But, as for bachelors—why, who can depend upon them? Bah! they can't depend upon themselves!

"When leap-year comes again I shall beg to propose that we demand of the Fellows of the Oxford colleges the privileges due to our sex and name. Will you join me in the adventure? They dine at five, so be punctual, and we'll march them off (armed with special licenses) to the Chapter House for the night, and be married the next morning at nine.—Won't that be nice?

"Motto.—May he who supports restrictions whereby the perfect law of nature is perverted, be perpetually denied the society of women."

Roars of laughter followed the reading of the letter; and the Fellows of Oxford will, of course, be suddenly assailed one of these days by a whole bevy of fair damsels, arrayed in bridal costume, and at once be led off to the altar of matrimony. Can you realize in your mind's eye the scenes such an onslaught upon the Fellows of Oxford would create? To be sure you can; and I have no doubt but that they, the Fellows, will, when the time comes, consider the degree to be conferred upon them through the wise interposition of the said fair damsels, far higher than D.C.L. or D.D., and a much more enjoyable one. Nice! I should say that the Fellows will think it nice; and, to a man, be sure to recommend the doctrine of marriage instead of celibacy, home comforts instead of ecclesiastical mysteries.

Oxford, however, like other ancient collegiate places, rejoices that her cloisters and churches are

no longer occupied by monks and friars, but by men of real learning and respectability. Oxford, the city of towers and spires, of groves and rivers, of grand antiquity, and of great scholastic fame, is no longer the seat of a cardinal, is no longer the lounging place for lazy parsons and idle students, but one in which talent of the highest order dwells, and which the genius of her teachers has made more glorious and lasting since it has commenced to shine in the mind of that noblest of princes, where, aided by the wisdom of England's truest council, may it and the best feelings of his royal nature, be developed for the world's peace and prosperity, and for the joy of his own blessed memory!

We know that in very early times Oxford became celebrated as a seat of learning; and it was there that Alfred, the lawgiver, poet, and king, sowed such seeds of learning and greatness that they will ever remain the wonder and admiration of his race, and seemingly his only monument. Verily is the memory of that just, learned, and prudent king blessed. No; England hath not forgotten—

> "Her patriot prince, her law-giver, her sage;
> Who taught her, nourished her, and sent her forth
> Rejoicing on her way, from age to age,
> Queen of the seas, and empress of the earth."

Long and reverently could one dwell upon the past of Oxford; but that cannot be done in these pages. To those who know its beauties and its history, Oxford will ever be interesting and remarkable. Its ordeal has indeed been a fiery one; and one cannot but hope that the time will come when every objectionable relic of its antiquity will be annihilated, and that it will give way to the just demands of a progressive age, even to the emancipation of its Fellows from the chains of celibacy.

But the buildings of Oxford are neither all gothic, nor Grecian, nor Roman; but picturesque nevertheless, and not without specimens of the grand, the symmetrical, and the florid. It is to nature, however, and not to the relics of antiquity, that we can expect new features for new buildings; and until architects can produce original conceptions in their designs, they must be looked upon as servile copyists, or as men who adopt and amalgamate foreign and home principles. Pugin, indeed, was not himself an inventor, he was only a re-producer; and so strong was his love for the Gothic, and so closely did he identify it with his religion, that he was once heard to say that if he found heaven not in the Gothic style, he would not stay there. Now, from this statement alone, we may judge that Pugin, like many ecclesiastics, and some few undeservedly popular preachers and writers of a professedly religious class, was an infatuated man. True art, like true religion, has but few principles, and they are of the simplest kind. In neither is there any mystery, nothing which could not be understood and appreciated, if we sought only for truth. But it suits the purpose of certain men to mystify what might be clear to the understanding, and to check the growth of popular progression. Now, all this is gross vanity, self-conceit and self-deceit, and positive evidence that even some learned men know not what they are living for; or, if so, that they care but little for anything of which they themselves are not the idol. But is there no real progression to come out of this antagonism to what is true and necessary? Certainly there is; and as a proof of the fallibility of error, and of the injustice of bigotry, party spirit, and individual caprice, we have only to compare the liberty and light of this age with the despotism and darkness of those which have gone by, when it will be apparent that we have

come out of as very a slough as ever the Vatican itself was. A good English Churchman rejoices at the sign of the cross; he also regards the royal arms of his country; but he will ever look with contempt upon places emblazoned with the triple crown of Rome, a symbol which has long been the greatest sign of human presumption, ignorance, and serfdom. But there are yet around us relics of her abominations; there are also other false and greedy teachers to rob and misguide; and it is from these, the mystery-makers, and false prophets, that we must withdraw ourselves.

The glory of England's freedom has been nobly won; but it must yet be brighter, purer, and more lasting than it now is. Arouse ye, then, ye who are apathetic, and ye who wonder rather than understand; arouse ye, also, who bear heavy burdens —the burdens of depravity, and of unholy and dishonest callings; and become men, men more capable of self government, self help, and self dependency. The material resources of a nation, however extensive, and easy of access, are no guarantee for its security and prosperity, unless the people of that nation are thoroughly educated, industrious, and honest. Education, industry, and honesty are indeed the elements of happiness and prosperity; therefore, no nation can be truly great and lasting where these elements are not general. Were it my lot to receive the homage of subjects, how little could I value it, unless it came from educated and honest men! I say, then, arouse ye who wonder rather than understand, and become honest men. How much thought is there necessary, before one could say one honest Hurrah, or one honest Amen!

I disbelieve the idea that this world is of necessity a world of suffering: If a man breaks the law, however, he must suffer for so doing, and he ought to be happy if he does not. It is not necessary for

a man to be miserable in this world, in order that he may be happy in the next. I never yet saw a good man miserable; but I have seen many bad ones on the very brink of despair. Now, the secret of happiness is worth finding out: and, if the reader happens to possess it, I will venture to say that he is one of those who go about doing good. The fact that one must leave this world some day or other need not make him miserable, because, if he be a good man, he has more to hope for in the next.

Now, in order that we may have more thoroughly educated, honest, and talented men in our pulpits, in the "house," at the bar, and on the platform, let every man and every woman not only admit the necessity there is for special orators, and for their being properly and adequately paid for their labour, but also strive to be able to detect and denounce error when it appears. If this plan were more extensively adopted, how few would be the number of "poor preachers," how few the men who would venture to address audiences more learned, more eloquent, and more just than themselves! This is the sort of check we require in our churches, senate houses, and other public places; and the sooner it appears, the sooner will profound scholars, eloquent orators, and just men, address thoroughly intelligent and thoroughly sympathetic audiences. We ought not to, and need not, be either the slaves of passion, of task masters, nor the blind admirers of what is not beautiful, and therefore untrue. Yet how many permit their thoughts and feelings to be moved to evil; how many are incapable of becoming their own masters; how great the number of those who admire what they ought to be able to condemn! But, such is the degraded position of some men, that they are afraid to use their discriminating powers, lest they should offend their patrons; while on the other hand there are hundreds of thousands

of people who, through ignorance and indifference, have no such power at all, and therefore can neither accept what they hear as true, nor reject it as false. No man, however, would be wise in losing his bread and cheese for the mere purpose of expressing an opinion, for fighting a battle, or for saying or doing anything which could fairly be proved unnecessary or unjust; but if, by right endeavours, he can advance the religious, the moral, the social, or the political interests of his country, let him be heard—let him be respected—let him be rewarded. But let us not be too ambitious; if a man is disposed to do good in either of the great fields mentioned, he need not lack opportunity, and perhaps he could not do better as a beginning, than to "look at home,' 'and to bear in mind the force of example.

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